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1. What is OnlyOffice?

OnlyOffice is an open source online office software that allows to work collaboratively and synchronously on documents (texts, tables and presentations). The collaboration software is functionally similar to "Google Docs". OnlyOffice is hosted on our own servers and therefore does not pose any data protection risks.

OnlyOffice offers the possibility to work synchronously on a text, table or presentation document individually or with several people. The respective mutual changes are made synchronously, i.e. in real time in the browser. You can create a new document via the ILIAS Plugin or upload a document that you have already prepared in advance. OnlyOffice is highly compatible with common MS Office formats (doc, docx, xls, ppt) as well as other formats, such as Libre Office (odt, odp, ods).

The software "OnlyOffice" has been made available for teaching at the University of Freiburg for the years 2022-2024 with funds from the [\[xln url="https://www.lehrentwicklung.uni-freiburg.de/4d-4-dimensions-of-digital-and-didactic-development"\]project 4D - 4 Dimensions of Digital and Didactic Development](https://www.lehrentwicklung.uni-freiburg.de/4d-4-dimensions-of-digital-and-didactic-development) funded by the Foundation Innovation in Higher Education. With the provision of the software, the much desired function of working together on documents is made possible for teaching and learning purposes at the University of Freiburg.

OnlyOffice has been docked to the learning platform via the ILIAS plugin, so that teachers can create OnlyOffice as an object directly in their ILIAS courses. Of course, OnlyOffice is also available for use in student learning groups and for the continuing education platform.

2. What can OnlyOffice be used for?

You can use OnlyOffice to have students work individually or collaboratively on text, spreadsheet, or presentation documents. Basic didactic scenarios are for example:

- Collaborative writing in a shared document (text document)
- Collaborative working on tasks (text document)
- Common data collection for search projects (table document)
- Preparing presentations (presentation document)

There are no limits to your creativity. You can, for example, also use presentation slides as a whiteboard. In this way, it is also possible to work together with "small cards" - similar to a pinboard.

3. How does it work?

You can create an OnlyOffice document independently in your ILIAS course. It is possible to either create a new (empty) file directly or to upload an already prepared file.

3.1. Create file

To create a new OnlyOffice file, go to your ILIAS course, click on the "Add new item" button and select the "OnlyOffice" option (Fig. 1)

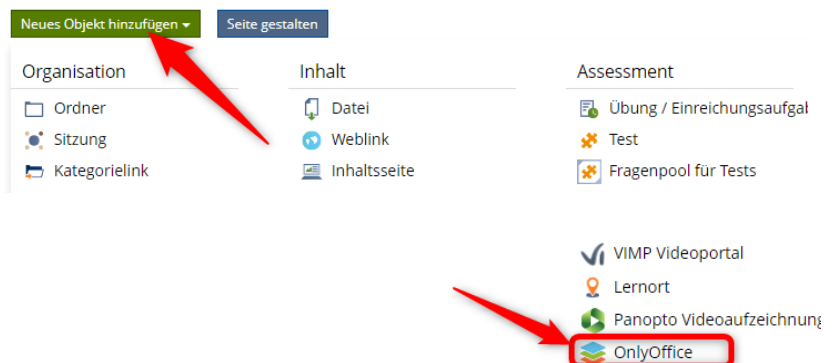


Abbildung 1 - Neues Objekt hinzufügen

3.2. Settings options

Now enter the settings for your document in the next step.

In the "Title" field (1, fig.2) enter the title that should be displayed for the OnlyOffice document in the course room. You can also add a short description if necessary.

In the "File" area (2, Fig.2) you can now choose whether you want to upload a prepared file or whether ILIAS should create a new file for you.



Abbildung 2- Einstellungsoption

If you select the "Upload file" option, an upload dialog box where you can upload a file as usual. You can upload text, spreadsheet or presentation documents. The common MS Office formats are supported.

Note: OnlyOffice is highly compatible with MS Office formats, but it may happen that complex formatting (e.g. animations in pptx, SmartArt etc.) are not supported or are ruined during upload. We therefore recommend that you upload such files on a trial basis in advance to ensure that all formatting is adopted.

When you select the **"Create new file"** option, three file options will open - Text, Table or Presentation (see Fig. 3). Choose the format that suits you.

Now tick "Online" (3, Fig. 2) to make your file visible to course participants immediately after it has been created. If you would like to edit the file yourself in offline mode first, leave the box unchecked. You can set the object online at any time via the Settings.

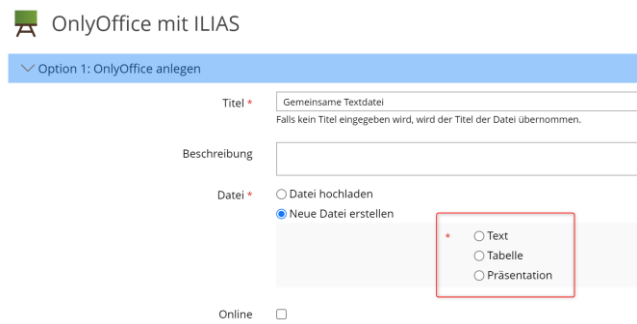


Abbildung 3 - Neue Datei erstellen

The option **"Users are allowed to edit"** is activated by default. You need this setting if you want your course members to be able to work in the document. If you only want to edit a document yourself and only release it for viewing (read-only), then deactivate the tick here.

In the section **"How should the file be opened?"** you determine what happens when you click on the OnlyOffice document in the course room. Three options are available:

- Open in OnlyOffice editor**
 With this option, course members will be redirected to the OnlyOffice online editor when clicking on the OnlyOffice object. Via the button "Back to ILIAS" (see Fig.4) you will get back to the ILIAS course room or to the version history of the OnlyOffice object.
- Show version history in ILIAS**
 With this option, course members will be directed to the version history when clicking on the OnlyOffice object. Here, the latest versions are made available for download. By clicking the button "Edit current version in OnlyOffice" you will get to the online editor.

Note: The version history can also be the other display options at any time in the action menu of the object under "Versions" (see fig. 5),

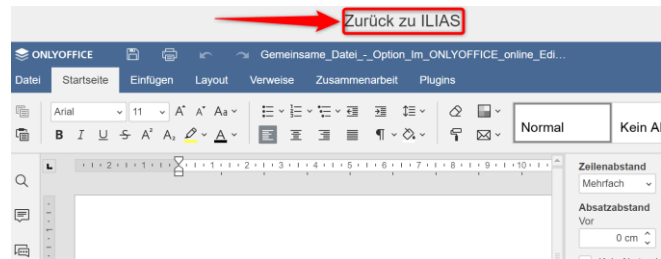


Abbildung 4 - OnlyOffice - Bearbeitung im online Editor beenden

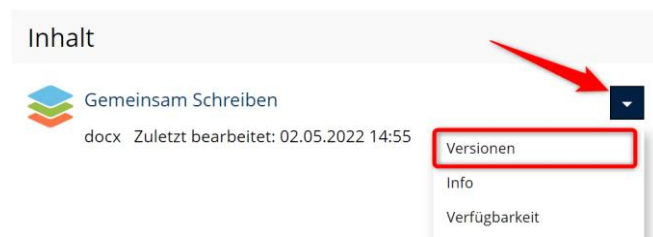


Abbildung 5 - Versionsverlauf anzeigen

- Download file**
 With this option, clicking on the OnlyOffice object will start downloading the file. This option is suitable especially when the joint editing of the document is not in the foreground, but a document should be made available that can still be edited compared to the regular file upload. Editing is possible via the version history (action menu "Versions, see Fig.5).

3.3. Important note on the „Co-editing mode” (individual setting)

In OnlyOffice you can make edits with several people at the same time. In the "Collaboration" tab, you have the possibility to individually set how the document behaves while you work in it.

The following options are available to you:

- Fast**
 All changes are automatically saved and displayed in real time. This means that you can see live where in the document other people are working and what they are entering. However, this also makes it very likely that lines are in motion when many people are typing at the same time.
- Strict**
 In "Strict" mode, the concrete changes made by other course members are hidden until you click on the "Save" icon to save your own changes and accept the changes made by others. The lines where you are working in the document are blocked for the others during editing.

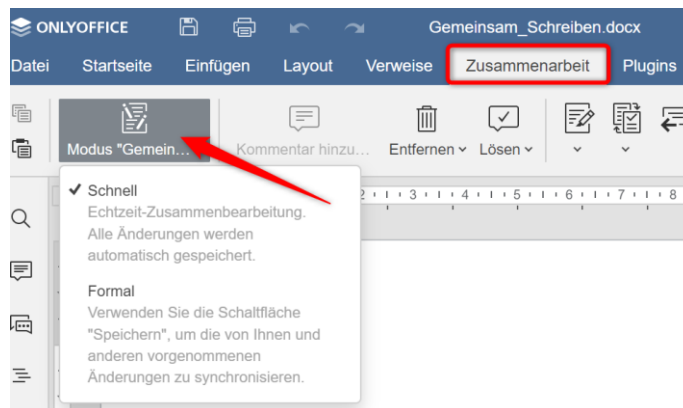


Abbildung 6 - Zusammenarbeit schnell vs. formal

Depending on whether you want to work in the documents live in the course room or asynchronously between seminar sessions, one or the other setting is more suitable. By default, the mode "Fast" is activated. This is an individual setting. This means that if you switch to "Strict" mode, the other course members will remain in "Fast" mode unless they also change the setting.

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4. Support and Contact

We would like to point out that the ILIAS PlugIn, which docks OnlyOffice to the learning platform, is new and there is not much experience with it yet. Therefore, please do not hesitate to contact us via e-mail (ilias@rz.uni-freiburg.de) if you have any problems or ideas for optimizing the PlugIn.

On ILIAS, you will find the "Support" section in the Repository with detailed instructions and support materials and a Forum for questions about ILIAS.

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