

Article: New Computers Usually WILL NOT Come with Microsoft Office

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Did you know?

Computers generally do not come with Microsoft Office. Microsoft Office comes in various forms including different products. Most typical version of Microsoft office are "Home and Student" and "Professional". For a short period of time, Microsoft was shipping some computers with "Office Starter" - a free Word and Excel (with ads), but that was short-lived. One of the most common misconceptions when buying a new computer is the assumption that that any new computer will automatically "come with Office." That's typically not the case. It doesn't even make logical sense if you think about it. The average quality computer today costs about \$600 which includes the hardware (Processor, Ram, CPU, Cd Burner, etc..) and the operating system (typically Windows 10). If you are buying a laptop then include the screen as well. Microsoft office "home and student", the most basic version, costs an additional \$149.99. Competition in the computer industry being as fierce as it is, prices are already at unbelievable lows. If you price the individual items a given computer, as though you were purchasing them and building your own system--even with OEM discounts you will find there is not a lot of profit made per tech item. If Microsoft office were included with the purchase of the computer, the company selling the system at today's low prices would actually lose money... and that's not very good business. Computers do however come with a TRIAL version of Microsoft office that you can use for a brief time before it disables itself. You must then pay to continue using the product. This is where I believe much of the confusion occurs. It's only a trial version. You must purchase a product key and you must keep that product key if you need to reinstall it in the future. There are however some great alternatives to Office if you don't want to pay for it.

Alternatives!

Fortunately, there are a number of fairly good alternatives out there. These FREE alternatives to Microsoft office give you the ability to produce spreadsheets or text documents and even create slide-shows like in Power Point. These alternatives are often compatible--though sometimes you may encounter formatting glitches. • **Libre Office** • **Google Docs** • **Office Live**

LibreOffice Website: www.libreoffice.org [1]

PRO: It's the most popular and frequently-downloaded Office-knockoff. I've used it numerous times with my customers who decided Microsoft Office was too expensive. It gets the job done and it does it well. It's compatible with Microsoft Office items such as Doc and DocX formats, although occasionally (albeit rarely) there may be formatting issues. Some companies and organizations opt to use this exclusively. You don't need to have an active internet connection since it installs on your computer like Microsoft Office. CON: It tends to be a little slower than Microsoft office. This product is built using JAVA which gives it the benefit of being more universal across platforms (PC/Mac/Linux). However that also means it's not optimized for any platform. It is open-source which tends to mean more rapid development and better security.

Google Docs: Website: www.google.com/docs

PRO: Google has a reputation for doing things well, and Google Docs is no exception. It runs well and provides the functionality you need for most things. It is NOT a program that is loaded onto your computer. This is a web-based application, meaning everything is done through your web browser (Internet Explorer, FireFox or Chrome). This gives you the nice ability to access your saved Google documents from any computer that has internet. You can begin writing a letter at home, then finish it at work then print it out at school. Some businesses have opted to use Google Docs precisely because of this powerful sharing ability. With Google Docs you can also share your creation with other people of your choosing. This means you can create a document which your friend Bill can update and edit as well. Obviously you can also create a document that others may view but not change. The docs you create with Google Docs are also located on the Internet, so if your computer crashes, you won't lose anything. In essence, the power of Google Docs is the power of the Internet.

CON: Since Google Docs does not load on your computer locally, you MUST have a working internet connection in order to get anything done. If you have no way to connect to the net, you won't be getting much done. Another limitation is the amount of free space you are allowed with Google Docs, which at present is 1GB; that can, however, hold a lot of documents and spreadsheets. The individual document size limit for Google Docs is somewhat small. Individual documents have a 2MB limit.

Microsoft OfficeLive/WebApp Website: www.officelive.com

PRO: In order to compete with Google Docs, and step in line with the future of web based applications, Microsoft recently released OfficeLive, a free online version of Microsoft Office on your computer. The advantages similar to Google Docs. Items are stored online, which means they are safe from local computer failure and can be accessed from anywhere you are able to access the net. You can also share docs with others. Another advantage is that the familiar look and feel of Office on your PC is presented with OfficeLive. (Whereas Google Docs looks and feels somewhat different than the Office Suite, which might throw some users for a loop.) Microsoft Office 2010 also can interact with OfficeLive with an add-on, allowing you to save documents created with the traditional Microsoft Office installed on your computer to your Office online account. You also get 25GB of free online storage space. Each Document can be up to 100MB in size, much more than Google Docs 2MB limit.

CON: Again, like Google Docs, if you are not connected to the net then you cannot access your data. While 25GB is a lot of free storage, it is still somewhat of a limitation given the average hard-drive of today's computer user is over 100 GB. This also does not as of current work with the Google Chrome web browser.

Conclusion:

When you go out and buy a new computer, don't expect a fully registered version of Microsoft Office to be included. You will get a trial, unless you've paid for more. But there's no need to fret. There are free alternatives out there if Office is looking a bit pricey. Keep in mind, however--Microsoft Office is still by far the defacto-office application used. Everything else must play nice with Microsoft Office.

Thanks for reading. Stay tuned for more Tech Tips from PcComputerGuy.



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