

K² Technologies News Blast

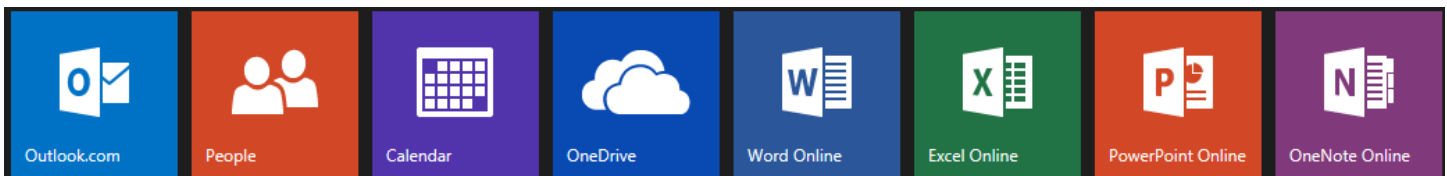
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What is Office 365, exactly?

You're getting ready to upgrade your office suite and you need to know what package to buy? At first look, Microsoft has overly complicated that decision by offering different versions of Office 2013 (do I need the version with Access or not?), which is something they usually do, but now there is a whole new category that you have to consider—Office 365.

What is the main difference between Office 2013 and Office 365?

Office 2013 is the 'traditional' version—you get a disc in a box with a license key (or you can download from the internet). You pay once, install it on one computer and can keep it forever. Office 2013 comes in three flavors (or versions, if you prefer). Each version includes Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and OneNote. If you want more programs than the four basics, you have to pay more. No matter how much you pay, you can only install the programs on one computer at a time.



Office 365 is the Office version that users can purchase and install on their desktops (just like Office 2013), but it offers additional features and a different payment system. As an Office 365 user, you can possibly get all of the programs in Office Professional (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, OneNote, Outlook, Publisher, and Access). Of course, the programs you have available offline depend on the subscription plan you purchase. If you don't need to use the programs offline, the most basic (and least expensive) Office 365 plans include Word, PowerPoint, OneNote, and Excel that you use online. You also get online storage, Skype minutes, and Microsoft tech support. In addition, depending on the plan you choose for each user, they can have the office programs on their local computer, or use the web applications feature and use the programs through a browser. The big difference is that you don't pay once. You pay a monthly subscription and can only use the programs for as long as you stay subscribed.

Getting started with Office 365

Choosing a plan can be a little daunting because (as with all things Microsoft), there are numerous versions with different price levels for each. Which plan you'll need comes down to essentially one thing: Will the user need the desktop applications or not? Now, what I mean by that—will your users need to have Excel, Word, PowerPoint, OneNote, Publisher, and Access on their PC or will they only need to use Excel, Word,

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PowerPoint, and OneNote from their web browser? If it's the latter choice, you would want to go with the most basic plan (Microsoft calls this E1). If they need the desktop programs, you'll want the next step up-which Microsoft calls their E3 plan.

Microsoft offers other business (and personal) plans which I won't discuss because the personal plans are just that—for persons and families. The other business plans have certain limitations (like a cap on the number of users) and once you're locked into these business plans, it's difficult to switch to either the E1 or E3 plan. (Neither of which are limited to a certain number of users and both contain team features that aren't available elsewhere).

What's included in Office 365?

Features included in Office 365 (both E1 and E3):

- Email & Calendars—you can use Outlook from your desktop or from a web browser using the Outlook Web App
- Online conferencing—Video, audio, screen sharing, real-time note taking, and instant messaging available all through Lync or Skype
- File sharing—OneDrive gives you and your users lots of options when it comes to storing, sharing, and syncing your files
- Team options—create project specific mail boxes, have team sites and use blogs and wikis to help track the progress of projects
- Office Online—Create and edit Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and OneNote documents from a browser

Additional features for E3 users:

- Office Suite—In addition to Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and OneNote E3 users will get the latest versions of Outlook, Publisher, Lync, Access, and InfoPath. All of the programs can be installed on up to 5 PCs.
- Office on more devices—Put office on your tablet, phone, and other Windows compatible devices
- Team Sites—Enhanced document view features and reports are available.

You can mix E1 and E3 plans so each user in your organization has all the features they need without paying for features they don't need.

Just think of Office 365 as the same Office you already use, only better.



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