



Microsoft 365 or Google Workspace

Description

Google Workspace vs. Microsoft 365: What's the best office suite for business?

Many small businesses may still be facing one of the biggest decisions they have had to make in technology since buying their first computer. When buying a computer with Microsoft Windows, we used to get a free toned down version of Microsoft Office called Microsoft Works. Its simplicity and price was great for small business. We also got Outlook Express to manage our email. Like Microsoft Works, **Outlook Express** was a free program that shipped with early versions of Windows. You can no longer download Works or **Outlook Express** from Microsoft and it's no longer supported with regular bug and security patches. Microsoft did not develop Outlook Express for Windows 8 or Windows 10. They only work with Windows XP and because it hasn't been updated in a very long time, it likely suffers from many security issues. Hopefully you will already have moved away from Outlook Express as your email client and instead use Microsoft Outlook or another popular client such as Google Workspace (formerly GSuite).

Many businesses upgraded to Microsoft 365 (formerly Office 365) because they were used to Outlook, Word and Excel. I still recommend Microsoft to clients if members of their team and their business processes are accustomed to using these applications. For older users there may be little point in learning a new application if their day to day work is embedded in the Microsoft ecosystem. I am not suggesting older people cannot learn new things, just some choose not to. My grandfather used to say to me "If it ain't broke don't fix it!"

As well as the handling of email in Microsoft Outlook, another constant for the older administrator, may be creating quotes and invoices using Microsoft Word or Excel. Not so long ago, I witnessed an administrator use MS Word to create an invoice from a blank page, print it on to paper, scan it on a large photocopier, convert it to a graphic PDF, email it to themselves from the photocopier, then email it to the client as a 1MB file using an AOL account with a 25MB limit. This was considered an improvement from the old days when they sent it in the post with a 2nd class stamp. Praise would come

from saving the business in postage costs without a thought for how long that process actually took. Not to mention the time involved in the weekly journey to the post box to catch the last post. It seemed like a justifiable reason to leave the office early on a Friday afternoon! Needless to say, there are many reasons why processes don't change regardless of how technology has moved on.

Many small business office administrators with 20 or 30 years experience are operating with no budget, no training and having to find their way themselves. They either adjust or stick with what they know. Usually it will be a combination of the two. No apologies here to experienced Sage Administrators but I regard Sage Accounting as a money pit and a deadend with a looming shelf life because of its limited cloud and CRM functionality. The sooner you switch to Xero Accounting the better.

It is not in the interest of their photocopier supplier on a pay-per-click income to advise on Xero Accounting, for example. Why would they? Similarly why would an IT Support company encourage a client to move their email and accounts system from the server under the desk to the Cloud or their computer based Word Processing Application to the Cloud? No hardware to support means loss of revenue for that IT company!

The case for Microsoft Office in small businesses is well documented because it is what we are used to but consider the following:

- **I want to speak to customers on the phone as cheaply as possible**. They probably ditched the landline and use an Android Phone - Google
- **I want more enquiries**. They want to be found on page one online - Google
- **I like the quality and speed of video on my latest Smart Phone and TV**. They buy or stream movies online and might have business videos or used training videos on Youtube - Google
- **I want to see results from my marketing budget**. They can monitor the number of visitors to their website using Analytics - Google
- **I want to spend more on advertising that is effective**. They advertise online using a Pay Per Click Service - Google
- **I want customers to find my showroom/workshop on a map and to easily navigate to me**. - Google

What business owners may do more of in the future is use video conferencing to meet with clients or to pre-inspect a job at a client's premises. Again, Google will lead the way once they catch up with and overtake Zoom. I cannot imagine Microsoft Teams ever dominating Google's Android Smart Phone. Had Microsoft succeeded in dominating the Smart Phone platform, it may have been a different outcome. However, In December 2019 Microsoft conceded by ending updates on their Windows 10 Mobile platform. [Microsoft recommends iOS or Android devices as replacements.](#)

In reality, the large corporates are still struggling with the move from Skype to Microsoft Teams. Microsoft care less about the average small business user as they tend to have to fend for themselves without the aid of an IT department and a big IT budget. If I am to prepare my small business for a future with mobile collaboration, online meetings and video, I think the smart money is with Google but hey, you decide!

Additional Reading

<https://www.computerworld.com/article/3515808/g-suite-vs-office-365-whats-the-best-office-suite-for-business.html>

Category

1. Knowledge

Date Created

01/10/2024