

Save Your Money Honey – Part Two

Last edition we outlined some FREE tools or utilities built right into Windows that will help you keep your computer safe, performing optimally and just work better.

So.. great we've got a secure, faster computer. But what can we do with it?

Besides playing games on Facebook, and Messaging or Chatting with all our Facebook or Instagram 'friends' we probably want to write a letter, compose or read some emails and maybe do the household budget. After all that's what computers were intended to do.

Crunch numbers, create written masterpieces and do it all so much faster than we could mechanically or with pen and paper.

Microsoft Word Costs HOW Much!!!

Word processing and spreadsheet applications are generally call "office automation" apps or office apps for short. Initially computers were so costly they were only found in the realm of offices, where word processing or number crunching was a daily chore.

Today almost every home has a computer or laptop, being able to create and edit documents, calculate and organize numbers for taxes, home budgets and even keeping a calendar or appointments and reminders.

Today's most well know office app suite is Microsoft Office. It's available as a retail package through Amazon, or at most computer or office supply stores. It's also available as a subscription service from Microsoft.

BUT.. it is expensive. Retail versions cost from \$100.00 for Home and Student version to around \$475.00 for the full suite, or Office 365 subscriptions run between \$11.00 per month or \$109.00 per year.

As a computer 'geek', Office is my go to suite for most of my day to day activities, and since most of my clients use Microsoft Office I need to keep up to date to support them.

However, for a family with a couple of children in school, or for those on fixed incomes, purchasing an office application suite can be quite a shock.

So what do I do to get my email and write Aunt Sally?

Most home users and small business users just need a reliable Word Processor to produce documents, a Spreadsheet to crunch numbers, and email client to compose, read and send emails, and maybe a presentation program to create slideshows for presentations or maybe show off all your vacation pictures.

Fortunately there's a bunch of FREE suites available on the internet that will allow you to do all this with ease.

Install on your computer suites:

These suites are downloaded then installed on your computer to provide the applications you need to use.

They reside on your computer and run on your computer, without needing to connect to the internet (except for email clients)

Open Office : available at <http://www.openoffice.org/download/index.html> . This suite has just about everything you'll ever need and has tons of templates available for just about anything you can think of to do with your Word Processor or Spreadsheets or Presentation applications. It's my favourite free office app suite.

LibreOffice: available at <https://www.libreoffice.org/discover/libreoffice/> . This suite is fast becoming a favourite of students and some small business users. It offers just about everything you get with retail Office and has a good selection of templates and addons like spelling dictionaries. It is also available in a Mac version.

One real nice feature is it's compatibility with cloud storage like OneDrive, GDrive, Sharepoint and some others.

The one drawback to these free Office suites, is they lack an email and calendaring client. However there are some great FREE alternatives to Outlook

EssentialPIM for Windows is available at <https://www.essentialpim.com/pc-version/> . You need to scroll to the bottom of the page to find the link button to download. It's pretty easy to setup and easy to use.

Since we're trying to get all the functionality of Microsoft Office, we have to stop there. There are other great email clients but they lack Calendar, or Task and Contact functions.

“Cloud” Based Office Suites:

In my opinion the main reason for using a Cloud based office suite is to allow for collaboration (shared working) on a document. For most home users, students and small offices this is not a requirement. But if you need to collaborate, here’s some alternatives to Microsoft’s Office 365

Google Drive and Docs: available at <https://www.google.ca/> . You will need to set up a Gmail account to use Google Drive and Google Docs, but it’s easy and straightforward. Google Docs takes a bit of getting used to, and doesn’t install local computer versions of the applications, but it works great, and can be accessed from a tablet or even a cell phone in a pinch.

Zoho Office: is available at <https://www.zoho.com/workplace/?src=zoho-home> .This suite has most of the functionality of Office 365, and real easy to use interface. All the apps are fully compatible with Office 365 files and integrate smoothly with one another, which is a bit harder to do with Google Docs.

I’ve only got very limited experience using Zoho but reports from users indicates it’s a wonderful alternative to Office 265, and did I mention it’s FREE.

OK, I can Write, Calculate and Present. What about Email?:

The one thing, besides Facebook, everyone wants to do with their computer is compose/read and send email. It’s quick, easy and MUCH cheaper than sending an envelope with a stamp.

Great FREE Alternatives to Microsoft Outlook:

By far and above the best alternative is EssentialPIM for Windows which is available at <https://www.essentialpim.com/pc-version/> .

This application gives you an excellent email client, slick calendar, integrated tasks and notes, cool contact manager AND it synchronizes with Android and iPhone devices.

If I weren’t so dependent on Microsoft Office/Outlook I’d use Essential PIM myself.

Below is a list of other Email clients. The only drawback is they don’t have the other PIM apps like Calendar, Contacts, etc.

	Available for	Portable version	Security	Supports	Digital signature
Thunderbird	Windows, Mac OS X, Linux...	✓	PGP, S/MIME	POP, POP3, IMAP, SMTP, NNTP, IPv6	✓
SeaMonkey	Windows, Mac OS X, Linux	✓	S/MIME, SSL/TLS	POP3, IMAP4, SMTP, NNTP	✓
Opera Mail	Windows, Mac OS X	-	SSL/TLS	POP3, IMAP, SMTP, NNTP	-
Evolution	Windows, Mac OS X, Linux	-	S/MIME	POP3, IMAP, SMTP, NNTP, LDAP	✓
Mailbird	Windows, Mac, iOS, Android	✓	SSL/TLS	POP3, IMAP, SMTP, LDAPv2	-

As stated earlier, my personal favourite would be Essential PIM.

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