

FREE ALTERNATIVES FOR OFFICE SOFTWARE

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MOTIVATION

- New Windows 10 PCs come with a trial of Microsoft Office installed, but this will soon expire, leaving you in need of a replacement.
- Macs come with Apple's own office suite, but if most of your friends are PC users, you might be better off trying a cross-platform suite instead
- See <https://www.techradar.com/news/the-best-free-office-software>



7 OPTIONS

- LibreOffice
- Google Suites – Docs, Sheets, Slides
- Microsoft Office Online
- WPS Office Free
- Polaris Office
- SoftMaker FreeOffice
- Open365



LIBREOFFICE

Everything you could want from an office suite, fully compatible with Microsoft formats and totally free to use – even commercially

- + Huge software suite
- + Full MS Office compatibility
- + Completely free



LIBREOFFICE - 2

- LibreOffice is very good, compatible with all Microsoft document formats, and has almost every feature you'll find in the latest versions of Word, PowerPoint and Excel.
- The suite contains six programs to cover every common office task: Writer, Calc, Impress, Draw, Math and Base.
- LibreOffice is an open source project maintained by a huge and enthusiastic community of volunteers
- There's a great selection of extensions and templates to make it even more flexible,
- LibreOffice is available for Windows, Mac and Linux, but there are no official mobile versions available except for a document viewer for Android.





GOOGLE DOCS, SHEETS AND SLIDES

For working across platforms and sharing documents, Google's excellent collection of online office apps is hard to beat

- + Cross-platform
- + Integrates with Google Drive
- + Mobile apps available
- Opening older files can be tricky



GOOGLE DOCS, SHEETS AND SLIDES - 2

- If you work collaboratively, or switch between a PC and a Mac, Google Docs, Sheets and Slides should be highly considered.
- For anyone who's already deep into the Android/Google ecosystem, this suite will be a natural choice. The three key tools run happily in any web browser, and are available as mobile apps for Apple and Android devices.
- Google's free office suite doesn't offer the advanced tools you'll find in desktop software like LibreOffice (there are no pivot tables, for example, and there's no database tool) but everything is laid out in a clear, logical way and all your files will be saved and synced automatically so you don't have to worry about transfers and backups.



MICROSOFT OFFICE ONLINE

Microsoft is taking the fight to Google with slimmed-down versions of all its usual applications, available to use free online

- + Fully compatible with desktop apps
- + Works with OneDrive
- Lacks some advanced tools



MICROSOFT OFFICE ONLINE - 2

- Microsoft Office Online looks and works just like its desktop equivalent, and although advanced tools like pivot tables are out of reach.
- If you generally use Microsoft document formats, Office Online is a very good choice. You can share them easily through your Microsoft OneDrive account.
- Currently, Office Online includes cloud-based versions of Word, PowerPoint, Excel, OneNote, Sway (creates presentations), Flow (automate tasks), etc.
- Similar to Google Docs, and Sheets, you can edit the files stored on your OneDrive or your computer.
- There's a version of Office Online for Chrome, plus mobile editions of Office for iOS and Android.





WPS OFFICE FREE

A feature-packed free office suite for Windows, Linux and Android

- + Supports Microsoft file formats
- + Cross-platform
- Contains some ads





WPS OFFICE FREE - 2

- WPS Office Free is a slimmed down version of a premium office suite.
- Each of its three programs looks just as slick as the latest versions of Word, Excel and PowerPoint, and is packed with just as many features.
- File format support is excellent, and you can save your work in native Microsoft formats for easy sharing with Office users. There's no database software, but WPS Office comes with an excellent free PDF reader
- There's the occasional ad, but these are few and far between. They certainly won't get in the way of your work.
- There are versions of WPS Office Free for Windows and Linux systems, as well as apps for Android devices, but Apple device users will need to look elsewhere.



POLARIS OFFICE

A cross-platform office suite that keeps your work in the cloud

- + Available for desktop and mobile
- + Includes 1GB cloud storage
- Bundled extra software



POLARIS OFFICE - 2

- This cross-platform free office software is available for Windows, macOS, Android and iOS, and comes pre-installed on some Samsung handsets. It's compatible with all Microsoft document formats.
- Take care if you choose to install Windows version, you'll see various additional pieces of bundled software, which could potentially include a browser extension from McAfee called WebAdvisor, a market research tool called PremierOpinion, and an antivirus suite. You can decline all of these – just be aware.
- Polaris Office is a cloud-based service. Your free Polaris account comes with 60MB monthly data transfer, 1GB cloud storage, and can be used across three devices (one desktop and two mobile).
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- Upgrading to a premium Polaris account gives you access to extra features including a PDF editor, removes ads, and the ability to search within a document





SOFTMAKER FREEOFFICE

A free version of a premium suite, with most pro features intact

- + Supports Microsoft formats
- + Includes PDF reader
- No thesaurus



SOFTMAKER FREEOFFICE - 2



- Like WPS Office Free, SoftMaker FreeOffice provides analogs for Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint (TextMaker, PlanMaker and Presentations respectively).
- As with all the free office suites in this discussion, there's support for Microsoft file formats from 1997 onwards. It also offers easy conversion to both PDF and Epub formats.
- Unfortunately, some key features are exclusive to the premium version of the software. Some of these (like tabbed browsing) are nice to have but non-essential, but the lack of a thesaurus is a real drawback for anyone who writes on a regular basis.
- FreeOffice doesn't look quite as smart as WPS Office.
- The paid for version adds thesaurus, administration features and caters for up to five PCs





Open365

OPEN365

More than just an office suite online.

Not to be confused with MS Office 365

- + Complete open source solution
- Do it yourself approach





OPEN365 - 2

- Open365 is more than just an office suite – it's a full cloud desktop that drags in a selection of great open source (usually desktop-based) software and puts it right in your browser.
- It includes the key components of the LibreOffice suite (Writer, Calc and Impress) along with Photoshop-like image editor GIMP, Linux email package Kontact, and cloud storage by Seafile. Everything the desktop versions of those packages do can be done here, and every format they support is supported.
- o There's a desktop client to handle file transfers and mirroring your cloud storage to your hard drive, although you'll still need to run the software itself in-browser. Being full-on desktop software it's reasonably heavy both in terms of load times and the stress it puts on your system.



LINKS

- LibreOffice: <https://www.libreoffice.org/>
- Google Suites – Docs, Sheets, Slides: <https://www.google.com/drive/>
- Microsoft Office Online: <https://products.office.com/en-us/office-online/documents-spreadsheets-presentations-office-online>
- WPS Office Free: <https://www.wps.com/office-free>
- Polaris Office: <https://www.polarisoffice.com/en/>
- SoftMaker FreeOffice: <https://www.freeoffice.com/en/>
- Open365: <https://github.com/Open365/Open365>



FOCUS ON 2 OPTIONS

- LibreOffice
- Google Suites – Docs, Sheets, Slides



LIBREOFFICE

The screenshot displays the LibreOffice application interface. On the left is a sidebar with navigation options: Open File, Remote Files, Recent Files, and Templates. Below these are application types: Writer Document, Calc Spreadsheet, Impress Presentation, Draw Drawing, Math Formula, and Base Database. The main workspace shows a grid of document thumbnails:

- American League**: A baseball statistics table.
- testing**: A spreadsheet with a table of numbers and a text area with dates and placeholder text.
- 2018 Oscar Balot**: A list of names and categories.
- Marilyn Backstreet cover letter**: A document with a cover letter and a handwritten note: "Fax To: Dr Anderson This is a copy of letter and report sent to the Handoff by John Backstreet".
- 2010 MLB All Stars**: A baseball statistics table.
- Doc Test Jim**: A document with a table of numbers and a text area with dates and placeholder text.
- 2018 Oscar List**: A list of names and categories.
- Marilyn cover letter**: A document with a cover letter and a handwritten note.
- Unit 21 Map**: A colorful map with various labels and data points.
- PCQC Email List 11-30-17**: A list of email addresses.

At the bottom of the sidebar are "Help" and "Extensions" buttons.



LIBREOFFICE

- Switch to LibreOffice
- Open All Files : 167 file formats !



GOOGLE SUITES – DOCS, SHEETS, SLIDES

Start With
Google Drive

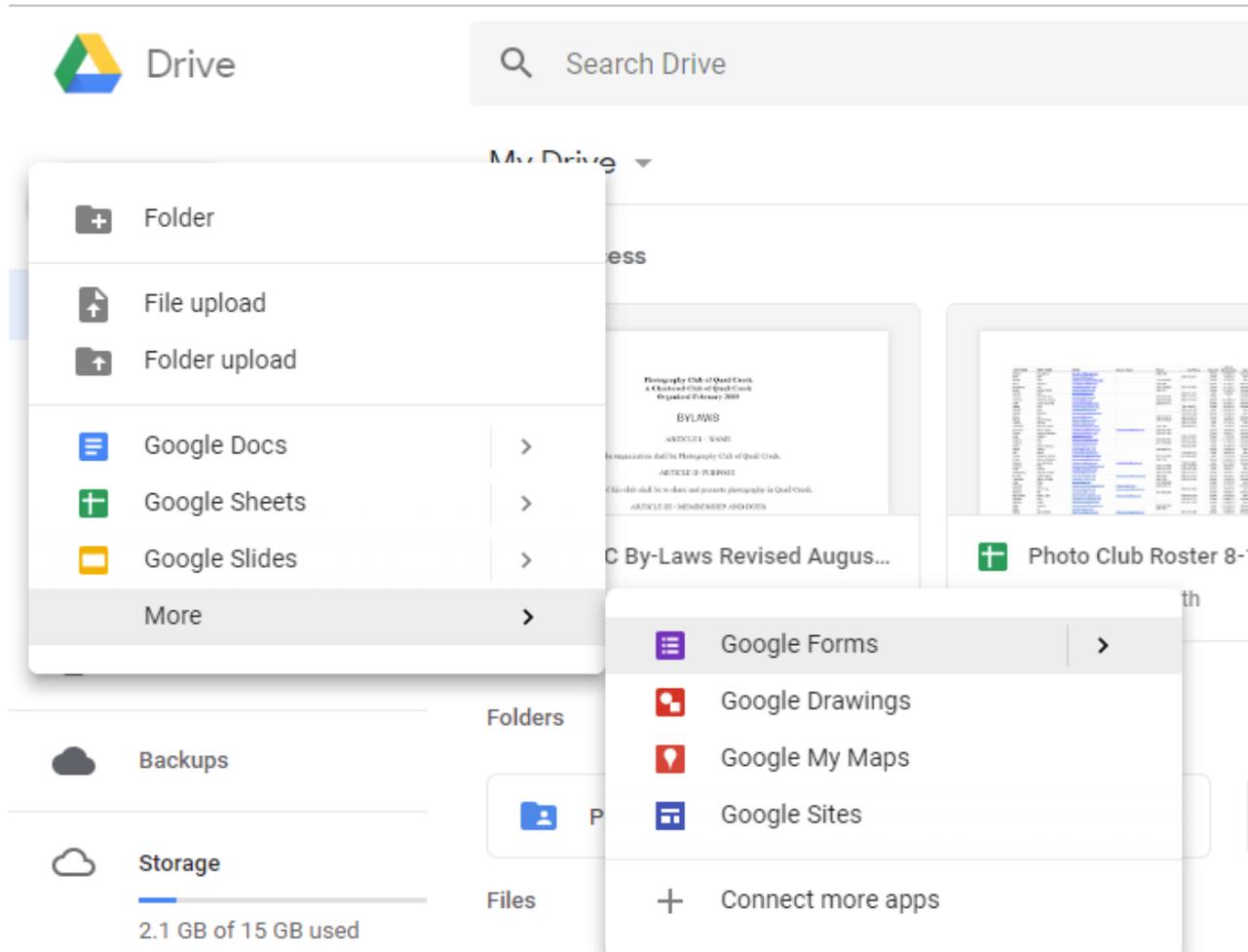
Easiest Way –
use Chrome
as your
Browser

Establish a
Gmail account
= Google
Account



GOOGLE SUITES – DOCS, SHEETS, SLIDES

○ Bonus Extras:



GOOGLE SUITES

- Switch to Google Drive



CONCLUSION

- If you are looking for free office software, I would download and try LibreOffice
- LibreOffice files should be backed up just like any other files you create on your pc
- If you are looking for a cloud based, collaborative solution, then try Google Suites.
- I will be giving a 2 part Computer Club Class on Google Drive and Google Suites beginning in November.

