

The Enterprise Cloud

Google Apps v. Office 365 summary: Which is better?

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Takeaway: Ian Hardenburgh sums up his research on the Google Apps and Office 365 suites. He has a preference, but it still comes down to individual needs and your number of users.

Over the course of the last couple of months, in an ongoing series comparing Google Apps and Office 365, I've compared a number of feature groups, which included each service's [basic productivity applications](#), [e-mail and messaging](#), [calendar](#), [content and document management](#), and [apps and professional services marketplace](#) line of products. In this wrap-up segment, I'll briefly discuss some patterns that I've discovered in my meticulous (perhaps obsessive) research. Furthermore, for you first time readers, and at the convenience of those readers who've been following along from the start of this series, I've taken the liberty of listing all of the features I've discussed in my previous Google Apps v. Office 365 posts, as well as combined all feature charts that match each and every feature under one single consolidated comparison chart (see link below to Excel-based chart). To see each separate segment, see the links above (in this very paragraph). Even though the feature comparison chart is very detailed, it helps to get a general sense for each feature/service type prior to jumping into all the specifics.

Parting sentiments

Initially, when I first set up my Google Apps/Office 365 comparison chart, I thought it would be most beneficial to talk about each feature in terms of enterprise size, or at least how I thought each feature might be exclusive to enterprises of small, medium and/or large size. To start a discourse about industry and organizational culture would be too difficult to quantify. Therefore, by prohibitively speaking about features in terms of the amount of enterprise users and the types of features certain users might need, I've forgotten to discuss one very important facet-strategy. Without a thoughtful migration or adoption strategy, it doesn't matter which SaaS-based productivity apps service an organization chooses, Google Apps or Office 365, because any ROI/ROE will entirely escape your enterprise. Furthermore, this endeavor you've spent so much time and money on can even face the danger of becoming a sunk cost or leave your IT department in ruin.

When reviewing my Google Apps or Office 365 features and comparison comments, try to think about how each feature might add value to your organization. Yes, there are other considerations, like each service's service-level agreements (which are practically a spitting image of each other, BTW), as well as price. However, if you first think about how Google Apps or Office 365 features might enhance your business, or translate to increased productivity amongst your users, you'll have a distinct advantage when it comes to implementation or migration.

So, which is better?

So at this point, you're probably saying, that's all fine and dandy, but which service is truly the better of the two? Well, I'd have to say Office 365, but only if your organization is prepared to (1) pay a premium (for a truly premium service), (2) take advantage of the advanced set of features noticed with auxiliary services like SharePoint Online, and (3) have the resources to thoroughly train your staff on the on-demand

technology (You will have users saying, “Can’t I just have Office on my PC like I used to?). Otherwise, the scalability of Google Apps, combined with the applications and professional services that can be gained from its Google Apps Marketplace is a *very close* second.

Therefore, in my humble opinion, I’d say most enterprises, with the exception of extremely large ones, can be well-served by Google Apps. In increased summation, go with Google Apps if you’re a small enterprise and Office 365 if you’re a large one. It really is a crapshoot if you have somewhere between several hundred and ten-thousand users (what I consider a medium sized enterprise). Hey wait, I guess comparing Google Apps and Office 365 was simply a matter of enterprise size after all!

Primary comparisons by feature/service type

Basic productivity applications

- Word Processing
- Presentation
- Spreadsheet
- Other (e.g., Google Apps’ Forms; Office 365’s OneNote)
- Sharing & Collaboration
- Offline Editing
- Document Sync
- Document Navigation & Search
- Import & Export
- Revision/Versioning

E-mail

- Space/User allowances : Max number of users, storage space, message sizes, etc.
- General organization and navigation
- Filtering, search, e-discovery capabilities
- Contacts and mailing lists
- Directory
- Migration
- Mobility
- Desktop client
- Security
- Policy and compliance
- Networking

Messaging

- Chat/video conferencing
- SMS/Voice
- Social

Calendar

- Organization (navigation, views, etc.)

- Appointments
- Invitations
- (Event) Notification
- Tasks
- Sharing
- (Application) Integration
- Mobility

Content and document management

- Document co-authoring/collaboration
- Document navigation and search
- Document change alerts
- Mobile documents
- Offline document sync
- Content collaboration and task management
- Domain sites
- Social content tools
- Content data backup

Apps & professional services marketplace

- CRM and ERP Apps
- E-mail Marketing and E-commerce Apps
- Productivity, Calendar/Scheduling and Project Management Apps
- Administration Apps
- Migration Services
- Backup, Security and Integration Services
- Other Professional Services

The [combined Excel chart](#) is very detailed, so for those who prefer a version to save to the desktop and manipulate, you can download it here. If you prefer to view the snapshot versions of each, they are available in each separate post as linked in the first paragraph.

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