

# Evaluating Google Apps as a way to reduce IT costs?

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*Google Apps is not an equivalent replacement for Microsoft products, so don't assume immediate cost savings based on licenses alone.*

*Before you rely on Google Apps for your business, make sure you understand the potential impact on your business.*

## Understand the difference between SLA and Support.

Google claims to have a financially backed Service Level Agreement (SLA). However, it's based on service credits and does not include any downtime of less than 10 minutes. Users could experience multiple downtimes of less than 10 minutes during a month without any recourse. In fact, Google limits the amount of penalty they're willing to incur per month despite the amount of downtime. Google provides 24/7 Web Support but will only take phone calls during limited hours of the week. In the past, new features released for Google Apps fell under Google Labs, which is not covered by the SLA.

### **Did you know?**

Microsoft Online® has a financially backed SLA of 99.9% and doesn't restrict downtime. Microsoft Online also won't give users experimental features in a mission-critical environment, and multilingual support is available by phone 24/7.

## Security is more than just who can access the server.

Google and Microsoft both have very strong physical security for data center access and basic industry certifications such as SAS70 Type II for services. However, Microsoft believes security is broader than this and should be considered holistically. For example, Google doesn't support the ability to send e-mail securely between users with rules such as "don't forward" or "view only" (Information Rights Management). Without this, documents can be easily leaked or information considered private inadvertently shared. If users build documents with watermarks such as "Confidential," these visual markers can be removed when converting to Google Documents. Even PIN enforcement or remote devices wipe for mobile phones are not supported. In the end, IT gets less security controls and you could pay more for additional solutions or breaches.

### **Did you know?**

Microsoft Exchange with Outlook supports the ability to mark e-mails with Digital Signatures, enforce Rights Management, and even flag by message type. Exchange, whether on premises or via Microsoft's Data Center, also fully supports security for mobile phones so your IT organization can be confident with layered security defenses.

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## Google claims Outlook support.

The Google App Sync for Microsoft Outlook® is positioned as a way to replace Exchange and keep end users happy with Outlook. In reality, the sync tool provides only partial synchronization and in some cases requires users to manage two different inboxes. For IT, this means deploying client-side connectors on every PC as well as setting up a server to synchronize your LDAP with Google Apps for a Global Address Book. All of this complexity means you get less features and may have to pay more for user training, impact on productivity, and IT deployment of new software. None of this is supported by the Google Apps SLA.

### Did you know?

Outlook's features are fully supported with Exchange, whether deployed on premises or in the cloud.

## Google claims to have solved "Offline," meaning you can deploy a browser-only strategy.

The Google Apps offline experience is enabled through Google Gears, a browser add-in that must be deployed to every user and is not supported by the Google Apps SLA. Furthermore, the offline experience is actually more like a view-only experience in which users can't create new documents, or edit spreadsheets or presentations while offline. This means users get less productivity and IT could take on added risk.

### Did you know?

You can synchronize files with SharePoint Workspace as a way to work offline. When reconnected, it transmits only delta changes with your documents. And with Outlook, you can work offline without the worries of what will work and what won't.

## Google claims Docs and Spreadsheets can be used as a way to replace or complement Microsoft Office.

Google does provide the ability to upload several document types into Google Apps as way to increase collaboration. However, as a result, Google limits file sizes and converts documents into HTML resulting in altered content such as missing charts and changes to document layouts. Layouts can be permanently altered, which could mean increased support calls, potential risk for loss of content, and increased conversion costs. In addition, the features available can vary causing a different experience or changes for every browser they support.

### Did you know?

With SharePoint and Microsoft's Office Web Apps, whether deployed on premises or in the cloud, users get full collaboration and a high-quality Web-based experience in terms of both features and fidelity. This allows end users to share documents with confidence and help reduce support costs.