

# Free Software For Your Business or Home Office

800 words

Rauf Bolden

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## **Free Software For Your Business or Home Office**

With wind in your sails, the time has come to clamber through the window of opportunity and fix the roof while the sun shines. Failure will leave you exposed when the economic storm clouds gather, and so it is with proprietary software, perpetually paying for a new roof. The window of opportunity is here to embrace free open-source software while the economy is surging, saving your business or family \$300 - 400 per computer instead of purchasing the new version.

Office software is like air. It is essential to survive. Several cost nothing, being available by searching the Internet for “free office software”. Included are word processing, spreadsheets, presentations, draw for publications, vector graphics, flowcharts, databases, and math for formula editing, according to various search results. Macs and Linux have office software bundled as part of the operating system.

Obviously this is a lot to get for no cost, but does it actually work? The answer is yes, allowing you to “Save As” in proprietary or open-source formats.

Imagine you have 30 employees, multiplied times \$400 per seat, equaling \$12,000 you save, installing open-source office instead of buying the next rollout of proprietary software. Reallocating these funds to grow your business or apply towards a capital project is arguably a better use of funds.

Migrating to another software suite instead of upgrading requires planning, getting your people onboard, dealing with the blow-back, knowing your employees are comfortable in their roles and do not like change. This is especially true of management, understanding technology upgrades requires additional effort from them.

Questions will surface. Why do we have to change? Can we go back to the old way? Why does the screen look different? Where are my documents?

All these hiccups can be resolved with forethought, planning, ingenuity, contacting the vendor’s team, and working with your IT Department. The reality of having the savings in hand represents a big win for your boss.

As a business manager or parent you must consider the cost savings versus the small inconvenience of educating your people to the benefit of lowering costs. You install it once. The updates are always current, providing security with constantly improving features. The software is written by the open-source community for the “greater good” not for increasing shareholders’ profits. Allowing governments to have modern software without spending taxpayer monies, allowing businesses to modernize without additional cost, allowing families to keep more of their cash.

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Compare what you have now by downloading the free-version, understanding that file compatibility is the most important thing to look for. Constructing a matrix of the differences will bring out possible training problems.

“Extra templates have to be downloaded and installed manually,” according to TechRadar. Free is not ribbon based, but old school with drop-down menus. “It is not as good-looking as suites from Microsoft and Apple,” according to PC Mag. Collaboration is not as easy as Google Docs.

For those who need a free-email client, Thunderbird from the Mozilla Foundation is available, knowing some employees or family members may get heartburn not having Outlook installed.

I downloaded the software onto a Windows 10 machine, having the Creators Update installed. The process was easy, following the prompts, taking the default installation.

All the free programs worked as expected, being forgiven for looking slightly dated. I typed this piece on free software hoping you are motivated to give it a try, enjoying the thrill of installing once, and not paying a computer-licensing fee for your family, municipality, or business ever again. The window of opportunity is here to embrace free open-source software while the economy is surging, saving your business or family \$300 - 400 per computer instead of purchasing the new version.

ENDS.