

Google Docs

docs.google.com

Create, edit and share documents online

what is it?

Google Docs is a lightweight Web-based suite of office applications that includes a word processor, a presentation tool, and a spreadsheet tool. While it won't replace Microsoft Office any time soon,, it can change the way you think about collaborative work. All three of the Google Docs tools supports multiple authors editing the same document, presentation, or spreadsheet at the same time, tracking revisions and showing, near real time, what each author is doing. Because the documents are stored online, they are available on any computer connected to the Internet. Import and export options allow you to upload Word docs, Excel, PowerPoint and PDFs (to name a few) and output back in the same format. You can also quickly publish what you create online with a click of a button.

educational use?

Students can use Google Docs to coordinate group work, including group papers. Instructors can easily monitor individual contributions using Docs's revision tracking tools. Likewise, faculty can simplify collaborative paper writing with colleagues by sharing the same document with multiple authors without the worry of coordinating various individual versions.

pros & cons?

With Google Docs, simple formats are best. Because this is a Web-based application, sophisticated formatting functions that you might use in Microsoft Word, or more advanced formulas available in a tool such as Excel, are simply not available at this time. But the ability to collaborate real time on documents makes these feature tradeoffs worthwhile.

what's it cost?

GoogleDocs is free.

alternatives?

Zoho (<http://www.zoho.com/>) provides a growing variety of Web-based applications, including word processor, spreadsheet, presentation tool and more. Adobe Buzzword (<http://www.adobe.com/acom/buzzword/>) is another alternative.

resources?

Google Docs in Plain English

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eRqUE6IHTEA>

7 Things You Should Know About Google Apps

<http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ELI7035.pdf>

Google Docs Help

<http://docs.google.com/support/>