

Microsoft 365 vs. Microsoft Office

Microsoft Office is still available as a one-time purchase for use on a single computer. The Microsoft 365 subscription includes all the apps, can be used on up to five computers, and includes a full terabyte of OneDrive storage. Given everything included, the subscription can be a very good value.

Microsoft Office is still available the way you've purchased it in the past. Whether you want to buy the Professional or the Home and Student edition, you can spend a few hundred dollars and buy one copy. Instead of a literal box, it'll more likely be a download, but it's still a one-time purchase licensed to run on one computer.

Microsoft 365 subscription option is to pay \$99.99 per year for the Microsoft 365 Family subscription.

There are several really interesting things about Office 365 Home subscription.

- It's all of Office. Desktop editions of Word, Excel, PowerPoint, OneNote, and Outlook, as well as Publisher and Access, are all included.
- You can install it on up to five computers! If you have five computers, it's effectively \$20 per year per computer. Even if you only have two machines, you've cut the effective price in half. (The five computers can be Macs, PCs, or any combination.)
- It includes at least 1 terabyte of OneDrive storage. Some people subscribe to Microsoft 365 just for the cloud storage.

That second point alone makes it really hard to compare against the packaged product, which can be installed on only one machine.

There is a cheaper "Personal" subscription for \$69.99 per year, but you can install it on only one machine.

In comparison, Office Home and Student includes four basic Office applications (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and OneNote), can be installed on only one computer, does not include any additional OneDrive space, and costs a one-time payment of \$149.99.

Make no mistake: it's not a different product. It's not "that much better." It's the same product.

It doesn't take five machines to make the numbers work. It's almost a no-brainer as soon as you have two or more computers.

Let's acknowledge the risk: Microsoft could raise the price. In the many years since Office 365 has been available, that hasn't happened.

There's also nothing that says you have to subscribe forever. If you don't like it, you don't renew. You make your choice every year.