

THREE FREE ALTERNATIVES TO MICROSOFT OFFICE

Microsoft Office is the gold standard for business productivity suites. But it can cost a lot of gold, even at today's low street prices. The Office Home and Business edition costs \$219, and the Professional edition goes for \$399. For home users, there is the Teacher and Student edition for \$140. Fortunately, there are plenty of good alternatives to Microsoft Office; many are free, and even those that are not cost much less than Office. Here are some of the best alternative office suites.

[Libre Office](#) is a free, open source office suite for Windows, Macintosh and Linux, that gives you six applications: Writer, Calc, Impress, Draw, Math and Base. Libre Office's native format is the Open Document Format (ODF), but it supports a staggering variety of other formats, including MS Office. If it sounds very similar to OpenOffice, that's because it's a fork from that project. When Oracle took over the OpenOffice project, some of the key developers left and started work on LibreOffice. It will run well on older machines that have limited RAM memory.

The [Kingsoft Office Suite](#) (WPS Office) is another worthy office suite contender, which includes Kingsoft Writer, Kingsoft Presentation, and Kingsoft Spreadsheets. All modules are fully compatible with Office file formats. Two versions are available: Free, and Professional (\$70). The Free version has a user interface similar to Office 2003, while the Professional version offers the Ribbon-style interface that will be familiar to users of more recent MS Office editions. A few notable features include PDF creation, macros, and a tab bar that allows you to switch between open documents.

[Jarte](#) is unique because it relies upon the WordPad engine built into Microsoft Windows. This gives Jarte the advantage of full compatibility with MS Word formats including DOCX. Jarte is a lightweight word processor app designed for students and others who simply want to write, without learning advanced formatting, image editing, and other power tricks.