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Microsoft Office 2010: Is it worth the money?

Steve Stryhalaleck

Microsoft's Office 2010 is here and once again it's time to decide: to upgrade, or not to upgrade. It's been four years since Office 2007 was released. Version 2010 became available earlier this year and has some excellent features that are interesting. Some of which are listed below.

Microsoft has changed the look and feel of their product in every upgrade and this version is no exception. The layout has been changed and the features and controls are not where you expect them. However once you sit down and start the test drive, the product layout is rather intuitive.

Google Docs is a free online office applications suite that has been gathering momentum. Microsoft has been feeling the pressure and has provided a solution of their own. If you found yourself uploading your office documents to Google and have been disappointed that you lost some formatting in the process, then the Microsoft Office Web Apps will definitely be something you will want to take advantage of. You don't need to purchase Office 2010 to use this new tool either, as it only requires a Windows Live account. You get 25GB of online storage for your Office documents and access to limited versions of the new Office applications that let you do the basics, including printing and downloading files. You can also share the documents with other users that use the service. For larger offices, there's the ability to integrate the Office Web Apps feature into your network using a product called SharePoint.

This gives remote users easy access to documents they need from anywhere in the world, as long as they have an internet connection. For companies where users work remotely on a regular basis, this feature alone is worth looking at.

Microsoft's Outlook 2010 has been improved and brings some much needed features. Most of the improvements are not all that noticeable but Office has improved its support for IMAP accounts. They have also added a new conversation view which will show a threaded email conversation which can be very useful if you get a lot of email. If you find yourself using social networking and you want to integrate your LinkedIn, FaceBook, or Windows Live accounts with Outlook, Microsoft has created the Social Connector. This utility will pull in contact information from these services and merge them into your contacts.

Word and Excel have received facelift's as well; the navigation panes have been redone. In Word there are some new design effects for text and in Excel there is new and improved support for Pivot Tables. Excel also has a new feature called Sparkline, which lets you highlight trends from your

spreadsheet data by creating small and simple line charts or bar graphs that occupy individual worksheet cells. Another one of the useful features of the new Word, is being able to recover documents that you forgot to save.

PowerPoint now has the ability to broadcast a presentation to a remote location. You can host a PowerPoint presentation straight from your computer without the need to use a third party sharing program. Another PowerPoint improvement is the ability to embed videos into presentations.

Mainstream support for Office 2007 ends in April 2012 and extended support ends in 2017. The difference's are with mainstream they provide phone support and application fixes in addition to security fixes, while with extended there are only security fixes. Mainstream and extended support for Office 2000 has ended (6/30/2007 and 7/14/2009). Mainstream support for Office XP ended 7/11/2006 and extended support ends 7/12/2011.

Overall, Microsoft Office 2010 is not a necessary upgrade, but there are enough small improvements across all of the programs that make it worthwhile for some users. Especially those customers who've had past issues with Outlook and those who need to have remote access to documents. If you have questions about anything in this article please feel free to email us at support@mhconsults.com or call our Client Services Director, Alan DeCoff at 866-964-8324 x74.

How To Customize the Grammar Checker in Microsoft Word

Microsoft Word's Grammar Check function is arguably one of its most widely used features. However, some writers may find it annoying that often-used words are always identified as incorrect or some words that would want to be flagged are left unnoticed. By having your grammar checker settings customized, it should allow you to work faster and not think that much about how your work is being written. This way you can focus more on the actual content instead.

1. Opening your MS Word. Start by selecting the MS Word icon from your desktop. Go to "Options" which is located in the "Tools" menu. You can then select "Spelling and Grammar".

2. Choosing your preferences. You can start choosing your preferences by selecting the "Settings" button, which is in the "Grammar" area.

3. Choosing between Grammar and Style. From here you can choose if you want MS Word to inspect your grammar only or both the grammar and the style of your work. The drop down selection near the top of your screen should hold the options that you can choose from. Remember that you can always revert to a particular setting. Feel free to jump from one setting to the next, depending on what style you require for a particular document.

4. Inspect the "Require" section. If you want to go over the subjective rules of grammar, you can view this near the top of your screen in the "Require" section. Go over the rules and select which ones you want to be applied on your succeeding work. You can set it to "Don't check", "Always" or "Never". You are the best judge on what rules you would want to be applied on your work so take your time selecting the filters. If you want an issue to be skipped or ignored, then select the "Don't check" option. Remember that this, too, can be changed as often as you want to.

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Virus on my cell phone?

Adam Gadoury

We have all seen how fast technology advances. It wasn't too long ago that the first computer was manufactured and it took up nearly one city block. Now PCs are getting smaller and faster. The same is true about cell phones. In fact most "smart" phones are simply miniature computers.

Just as computers have been plagued by viruses, people have started writing viruses meant just for smart phones. These viruses can infect your phone a few different ways.

The first is infection by SMS or text messages. Some spam text messages can contain links that when clicked can download a virus to your phone. This can lead to the phone then sending out that same virus to all the contacts on the phone and so on. These viruses can also cause the phone to seem sluggish, crash and cause a multitude of other problems.

The second way to get infected is by email. Most smart phones today allow users to check their email on the phone. Just like a user getting a virus by opening an infected email on their PC they can do the same on the new smart phones. The same symptoms can occur with these types of viruses; however instead of sending text messages it would send out the virus using your email account.

The last main way to get a virus on a smart phone is by loading an infected application. Apple, Google and others have thousands of apps that you can download to your phone. However there are many that are created just to load a virus on your brand new smart phone. These virus can do a multitude of things such as gain personal information saved on the phone, copy all your contacts and send them to unknown users, and they can even track your phone calls and record voice conversations.

At this point many people are probably weary of getting that new smart phone, however there is good news. Just as there is anti-virus software for your computer, there is also anti-virus software for the new smart phones. This anti-virus will scan incoming SMS messages, email, and also scan any files that are loaded onto the smart phone to be sure that the phone is secure. There are several versions of anti-virus for smart phones depending on the type of phone and some software can be downloaded for free from the carriers download content.

If you have any questions about how to better protect your handheld device or think it may be infected by a virus, please call M&H Consulting and we can help provide you with information on how to best utilize the internet for your business. You can contact us at 866-964-8324 x4 or email support@mhconsults.com

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