

LibreOffice vs MS Office: the Battle of the Suites?

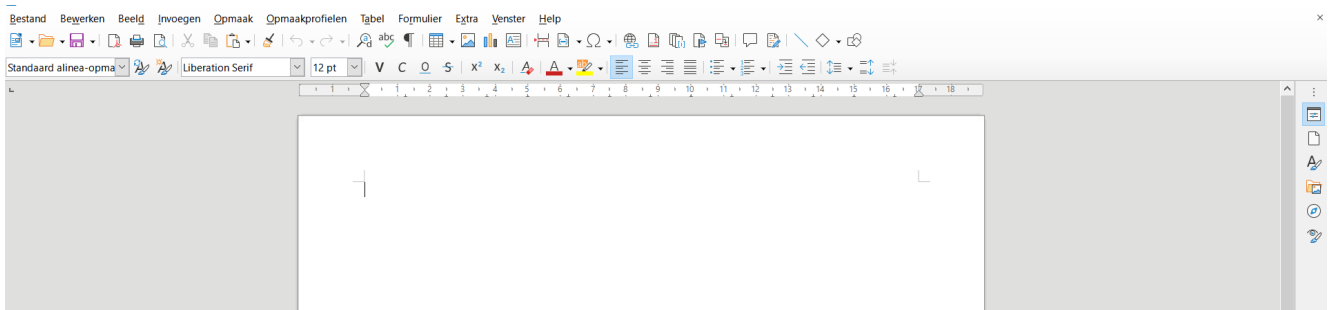
Microsoft Office is used in many offices around the world. But, nowadays there are competitive alternatives as well, like Google Docs or LibreOffice. It may seem attractive to switch from a paid to a free software license. However, both Microsoft Office and the open-source LibreOffice have their pros and cons. Let's take a closer look at both office suites to make an easy decision on what to choose.

Paid vs Free

The key difference between both suites is that MS Office is a commercial software license. In short, Microsoft wants to earn money by selling licenses. On the other hand, LibreOffice is an open-source software package, developed by a community of developers to be used for free.

Design

When you install and open the LibreOffice Writer for the first time it looks like it is of lower quality in comparison to Microsoft Office. Though in comparison to MS Office the so-called ribbon is actually the same.



Programs

One of the key considerations to choose between Microsoft

Office and LibreOffice is the programs that are available. LibreOffice in comparison with MS Office has the same programs available. The small difference is that MS Office comes standard with MS Outlook and OneDrive.

MS Office	LibreOffice
Word	Writer
Excel	Calc
Powerpoint	Impress
Access	Base
Publisher	Draw
Outlook	–
OneDrive	

Compatibility

Of all the free office suites available, for example, Apache Open Office and LibreOffice, LibreOffice offers the best file compatibility. All the available tools can import and export all the most common file formats. Which includes Microsoft DOCX, PPTX, and XLSX. However, users of LibreOffice need to keep in mind that documents will not always look exactly the same in LibreOffice as they do in Microsoft Office programs. The reason for this is that MS Offices uses its own fonts. Another point is the difference in how the data is interpreted and rendered on-screen.

Maybe, for most purposes, this does not have to be a problem. But it is, in case you frequently share files with people outside your organization who do not use LibreOffice but the more mainstream MS Office. If you take this into consideration it might be more convenient to stick with the same office suite as your peers to ensure everyone is on the same page or at least use file formats they all can handle.

Support

If you use Microsoft Office, the payed license is for customer support. But how often do you reach out to customer support? There is a Microsoft help app and online chatbot available with common problems and provide solutions. Next to that you can always use the telephone to talk to real Microsoft technicians.

In case you use LibreOffice, unfortunately you rely on the goodwill of [Community Assistance](#). There is a ticketing system available to submit queries or ask questions. The support is rated good, although it all depends on volunteers that spend their time and expertise. But the support is online only.

Cloud storage

LibreOffice does not have online cloud storage. In this case you will have to sort it out yourself. Fo example, with Dropbox, Google Drive or sign up for Microsoft OneDrive without being an Office subscriber or check out one of the free storage providers.

If you use a MS Office license key then Microsoft OneDrive is available. It is the default save location for all new documents. On the other hand, Microsoft Office 365 gives a user more online storage space than with a free OneDrive account.