

MICROSOFT EXCHANGE 2007 vs. GOOGLE APPS

Introduction

Microsoft Exchange Server 2007 is a proven, enterprise-grade messaging platform, built for easy installation and deployment. Its substantial feature set enables it to serve businesses of all sizes and types. It can be deployed as an on-premises or hosted solution. These reasons make it one of the most widely deployed messaging platforms in the world today.

In 2007, Google introduced Google Apps. This suite of online applications is frequently positioned as a low-cost alternative to Microsoft Exchange and other Microsoft products. Because customers perceive Google Apps' cost to be low and its features to be adequate for their needs, some may consider moving from Exchange Server 2007 to Google Apps. This discussion will help you understand the potential business impact of such a move. It will help you understand the real differences between the two solutions and enable you to make the right choice for your business.

About Google Apps

Version	Audience	Revenue model	Storage per user	Uptime SLA
Google Apps Standard Edition (GASE)	Small and mid-sized businesses	Free, ad-supported	2.7+ GB	None
Google Apps Premier Edition (GAPE)	Small to large businesses	\$50 per user per year to start	25 GB	99.9%
Google Apps Education Edition	Educational institutions	Free	2.7+ GB	None
Google Apps Partner Edition	ISPs	Free	N/A	N/A

Products included

Product	Function
Gmail	E-mail
Google Chat/GTalk	IM, PC-PC VoIP
Google Calendar	Calendaring
Google Page Creator	Team sites
Google Docs, Spreadsheets, Presentations	Office productivity
Start Page	Portal

Additional functionality in GAPE and Education Editions:

- 24/7 phone support
- Optional advertisements
- Room and resource scheduling
- APIs for extensibility and directory integration
- E-mail routing controls
- Policy management and message recovery (Postini)
- E-mail migration tools
- Third-party applications and services

Google Apps Positioning

- Open standards simplify integration with existing infrastructure.
- Enhance and extend communication.
- Allow everyone to work together across multiple applications and common services.
- Use Google's infrastructure and support instead of in-house architecture.
- Get cutting edge technology from Google.
- Give end-users ease of use, personal and group scheduling, real-time collaboration.
- Give IT admins ease of setup and provisioning, centralized control, no hardware, no maintenance, no deployment/downtime, no costs, ease of use for users.

Google Apps Strengths

- Simple, user-friendly interface
- Can be used with any POP3-enabled client

- Distributed data centers mean quick access to customer information worldwide
- Maintained and hosted by Google
- Mobile access included (via WAP site and/or mobile client)
- Built-in antivirus/antispam leverages the Gmail user base for filtering
- Uses Google Search
- Brand strength/reputation
- Supported in 40+ languages
- Single sign-on

Google Apps Weaknesses

Privacy & Security

- Information controlled and maintained by Google, which has had security incidents ([example1](#) and [example2](#)).
- Google can see all customer data; ads served based on e-mail content for ad-supported edition (GASE).
- E-mail is potentially never deleted –Google reserves the right to maintain copies of all information in backups per their terms of use ([see](#)).
- Google will not guarantee customers that, if subpoenaed, Google would notify customers before releasing data.
- Customer relies on Google to maintain backups of all information, which is not guaranteed ([see](#)).

Enterprise Functionality & Reliability

- No native offline client: POP for e-mail only; IMAP available, but does not match online experience.
- No native Active Directory support; third-party connectors cost extra.
- Simplistic directory limited to basic information and combined with personal stored contacts.
- No ability to differentiate contacts.
- GASE users are required to view ads, potentially distracting employees and reducing productivity.
- Administrative functions not centralized; for example, Google Apps is administered using a different interface than Postini.

- No Tasks feature.
- No simple mechanism for password recovery or reset; must contact a domain administrator.

Hidden Costs

- Corporate requirements such as offline access, rich directory support, and regulatory compliance require third-party applications, resulting in additional cost and complexity.
- Compliance tools like journaling or rule-based routing require third-party applications, increasing cost and complexity.

Reduced Control

- Applications and functionality are distributed to users without warning or administrative control.
- Users cannot be tiered; businesses can choose GASE or GAPE but not both.
- Google's 99.9% uptime SLA has reportedly not been kept ([example1](#) and [example2](#)).
- Products still labeled "Beta", which means they may not be ready for broad enterprise use and lack a clear, public product roadmap.

Positioning Exchange against Google Apps

- Microsoft Exchange is a proven enterprise-grade messaging platform.
- Microsoft Exchange incorporates with the Microsoft Office suite, Active Directory, the Windows platform, Windows Mobile, and Microsoft Office SharePoint, providing flexibility and ease of deployment.
- Customers control their information with Microsoft Exchange; security and privacy are maintained through secure connections, strong authentication, and granular management rights and compliance rules.
- Rich set of clients (Microsoft Office Outlook, Outlook Web Access, Microsoft Office Outlook Mobile, Outlook Voice Access) enable access to Microsoft Exchange online or offline—even without a computer.
- Microsoft is committed to a public product roadmap that is responsive to customer needs.
- Microsoft and partners offer hosted versions of Exchange, enabling customers to place some or all their users on a hosted platform.
- Microsoft and partners offer a breadth of support offerings for businesses of all sizes.

Questions?

- Can you trust Google to maintain the security and privacy of your information?
- What happens when Google Apps is down?
- What mechanisms does Google provide for maintaining backups of your data? The SLA covers downtime, but does it also cover lost data?
- Do you control if and when upgrades are distributed to Google Apps users?
- What is the Google product roadmap and does it align with your business needs?
- What functionality or features is Google developing for the enterprise market?
- What happens if you don't have Internet access for a time?
- What is the experience of using Gmail offline really like?
- How will your users work when they don't have Internet access?
- How will Google notify you if the service is down? What backup mechanisms are in place to keep business going?
- Does Google Apps support all your business needs, or are you losing functionality for a perceived price benefit?

Objections Anyone?

Google Apps is a hosted service, so it doesn't require the installation, configuration, and complex infrastructure required by Microsoft Exchange.

As opposed to the "pure" hosted model of Google Apps, Microsoft Exchange offers the choice of on-premises or hosted solutions, or using both at once. Companies can choose the architecture that works best for their business needs, adapting as those needs change. Google does not offer this flexibility.

Additionally, the simple feature sets of Google Apps are not comparable to those of Microsoft Exchange and other Microsoft products, which are designed to meet the needs of businesses ranging from sole proprietorships to the largest enterprises. Plus, Microsoft has one of the widest-ranging partner networks in the IT industry, making it easy to find the support you need to keep your IT infrastructure running.

GASE is free and GAPE is inexpensive.

GASE is supported by ad clicks generated by your employees. Do you want employees distracted by ads while they are trying to work? For GAPE, the \$50 a year fee doesn't include

third-party products such as directory integration or compliance/archiving tools, which can add to the cost. If the company needs the full productivity features of Microsoft Office, they will pay twice for the same functionality. Microsoft offers discounts for purchasing Microsoft Office in combination with Exchange Server and the Windows operating system.

Google is a well known services company and is well respected, so why is the privacy of my information a concern?

Google reserves the right to change their privacy policy and terms of service at any point. Your data, which at present cannot be easily removed from Google Apps, is available for Google to use.

Google also maintains rights to your information even after you delete it. The risks of data loss, confidential information being released, or employees being profiled by Google for advertising revenue should be weighed against the up-front costs of Google Apps editions.

Google Apps is completely integrated and easy to use; I don't need anything else.

Google Apps provides some sharing and collaboration, but does not provide the substantial business process integration and rich collaboration features offered by Microsoft Exchange and other Microsoft products. Businesses should consider their future needs when choosing a messaging solution.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Microsoft Products and Services

- Microsoft Exchange: www.microsoft.com/exchange
- Microsoft Office Live: www.officelive.com
- Microsoft Online Services: www.microsoft.com/online/

News Stories

- InformationWeek: Office Live vs. Google Apps: www.informationweek.com/industries/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=193003850&articleID=19300385
- PC World: Low Priced Google Office Suite Not Ready: www.pcworld.com/article/id,136350-pg,1/article.html
- PC World: Could Google be bad for your career? www.pcworld.com/article/id,136320-page,1/article.html
- ZDNet: The Problem with Google Apps Engine: <http://blogs.zdnet.com/Google/?p=1002>