

Medical Office Systems, LLC

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Office 2010 and POP Email

This month we'll cover Microsoft Office software licensing, and how to make e-mail work for you if you have multiple devices. Lest you think those two topics are boring, you may wish to take notice: there are cost savings and efficiency improvements you can take advantage of.

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Microsoft Office Software Licensing

Microsoft Office is the pre-eminent office productivity suite available today. It is comprised of the familiar Word (word processing), Excel (spreadsheet), PowerPoint (presentations), OneNote (note taking), Outlook (email) Publisher (publishing), and Access (database). Microsoft has made some significant changes in which programs are packaged together, how many licenses are allowed, and what it costs.

Office 2010 can be purchased in several formats, the newest method is a pre-loaded (but not installed) package on a new PC. By purchasing a license card with the activation code, you can unlock the pre-load and never have to touch a CD or DVD to install the software. Microsoft has also relaxed the installation rules as you can see in the table below – the prior rule was one purchase, one PC installation. For home users or small business that was an expensive proposition, and realistically, not very practical.

| | Office 2010 Starter Edition | Office 2010 Home & Student | Office 2010 Home & Business | Office 2010 Professional |
|-----------------------|---|-----------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| Licensing | Pre-Load or Free Download | Pre-Load or Retail CD | Pre-Load or Retail CD | Pre-Load or Retail CD |
| Restrictions | None | Home/Student Non-Commercial | None | None |
| Installs on __ PC's | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Word | X | X | X | X |
| Excel | X | X | X | X |
| Powerpoint | | X | X | X |
| OneNote | | X | X | X |
| Outlook | | | X | X |
| Access | | | | X |
| Publisher | | | | X |
| Cost: Retail/Discount | Free | \$150 / \$130 | \$280 / \$250 | \$499 / Ouch! |
| Quick Take | If you don't mind pop-up ads, free is hard to beat. | Best deal for Students. | Significant cost reduction for small businesses. | The full package at full price. |

Summary: Microsoft has significantly increased the availability, relaxed the restrictions, and decreased the cost of obtaining Office 2010. This is in response to the free online software such as Google Docs, and the free download of competitive products Open Office and Libre Office. Competition is a good thing!

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Email on Multiple Devices

The days of POP3 email are rapidly drawing to an end. POP3 is the original email delivery protocol, and although reliable, its better days are behind it. Email itself has not really changed, what has changed is that POP3 is now being asked to run on multiple devices.

Mobility and multiple devices is where POP3 breaks down – it has no capability to manage email on multiple devices. POP3 was developed in an era of single user, single computer. Now, many people have at least three devices on which to check email: a desktop, laptop and a mobile phone.

A quick review of email protocols - there are three: POP3, IMAP, and MAPI. Compared to IMAP and MAPI, POP3 is the only one that physically moves messages from the server to your client device. IMAP and MAPI keep the messages on the email server, allowing the local device to view messages stored on the server.

The advantage to keeping the messages on the server is twofold: if the client device crashes or is lost, the messages are still on the server. Second, if the messages are not moved off the server, they are available to be viewed on other client devices. IMAP is an open standard and applies to email messages only. MAPI is a proprietary Microsoft protocol, and operates only with the Outlook email client. MAPI can synchronize not only email, but also contacts and calendar items. Each protocol has the properties listed in the chart below.

| Properties | POP3 | IMAP | MAPI |
|-------------------------------------|------|------|----------------------------------|
| Syncs Email on multiple devices | NO | YES | YES |
| Syncs Contacts on multiple devices | NO | NO | YES |
| Syncs Calendars on multiple devices | NO | NO | YES |
| Works with email clients: | Any | Any | Outlook (PC) and Entourage (MAC) |

The bottom line: if you have multiple devices on which you check email, POP3 is not what you want to be using. With POP3, you end up with messages on one device and not the other. Other symptoms are that email you delete on one computer shows up again on another, and you have to delete it all over again. Switching to IMAP or MAPI will solve those issues, making your email handling more efficient.

The ultimate solution is to switch email to a MAPI-based server and use Outlook or Entourage. This was once the province of only big corporations, but now is available as a single-user solution via hosted “Cloud” email services. With MAPI, everything you need is synchronized across multiple devices, all the time. No more problems of missing messages, some contacts here, some there, and calendars with missing appointments. More detail about low-cost, hosted “Cloud” email is [available on my website](#).

Call me if you have any questions about Microsoft Office licensing or how to improve your email handling. I welcome any comments or suggestions for future topics as well.

John Becker