



7 pitfalls of free software to avoid



Free software may seem like a great deal, but it often doesn't offer the level of security, professionalism, or tools businesses need to grow. Explore these seven all-too-familiar situations to learn whether you have the right software solution working for you.

Collaboration challenges

You want to make sure incompatible free software solutions don't create collaboration problems.



If you have multiple people who work in different time zones or with different devices, you need compatible software that helps you collaborate seamlessly and securely. Choosing software that can manage calendars and host online meetings will allow you to send, receive, and store data securely, making collaboration a breeze.

Unprofessional email

You want a professional-looking email address you can access anywhere, knowing your data is being defended.



When you send business email from a free domain, it can look unprofessional to potential customers and ultimately impact your ability to grow your business. Look for a solution that lets you customize your domain to match your brand and also helps protect your business from cyberthreats.



Data insecurity

You're about to sign a deal when your customer asks, "What do you do to protect my data?"



You need to protect your business and your customers, which means protecting things like customer credit card information and sensitive business data. Look for solutions that offer integrated security and make IT management easier, as well as automatic upgrades to defend against new and evolving cyberthreats.

No device management

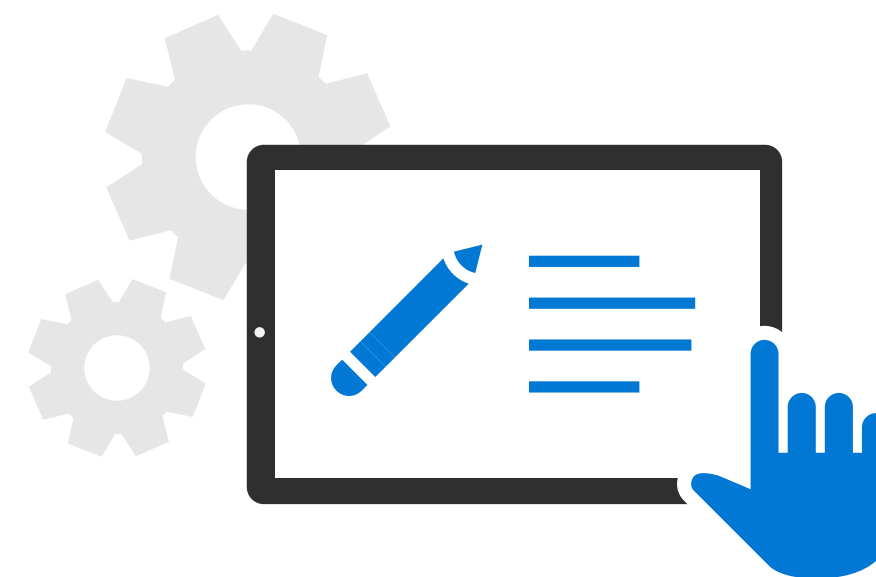
You and your employees need to keep business data separate and secure when using a personal device for work.



Many businesses allow employees to use personal mobile devices to work from anywhere. But this also puts your business and customer data at risk. Look for solutions that enable you to easily manage data policies on company-owned and employee-owned devices, helping keep your data protected without creating an IT headache.

Working offline

You try to edit your presentation while traveling to a client meeting, but you need an internet connection to use your software.

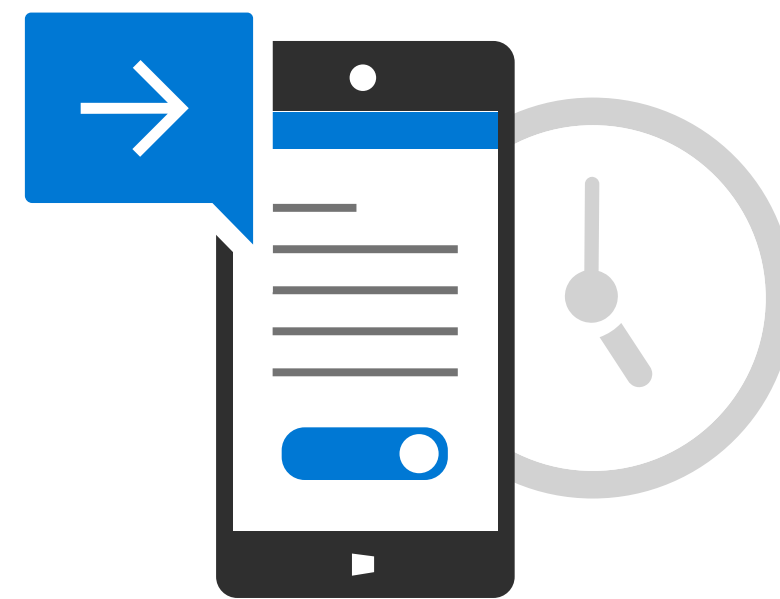


When you're working outside of the office, you need software to help you get work done. Choose a solution designed for mobile use that includes the ability to access and edit your work wherever you are.



Incompatible software

You send a client a contract, but your incompatible software means they can't open it.

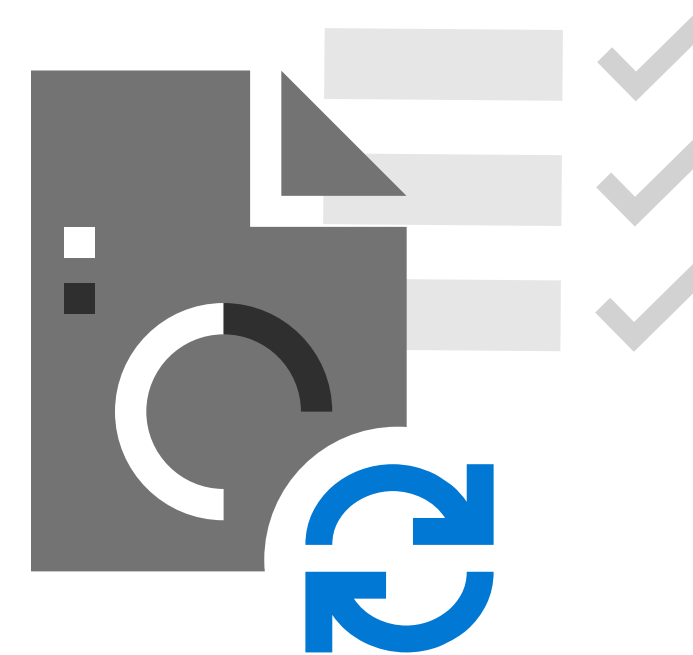


A lot of free software uses proprietary formats for documents and spreadsheets. Look for software that doesn't force your customers and partners to use converters and workarounds to access your deliverables.



Limited features

A key investor needs a report as soon as possible, but your software won't let you format it to their specifications.



Make sure your software lets you do the things you need to do, from managing finances to building investor-ready presentations. Software designed for personal use may not have the professional functionality your business requires.

Make the right move for your business

Using free software can be tempting. But also consider the benefits of investing in proven solutions. With the above guidance in mind, your goal should be to choose products that make the most sense for your business today and in the future.

Take a guided tour of Microsoft 365 to learn how cloud-based solutions can help you look more professional and offer the flexibility your business needs.

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