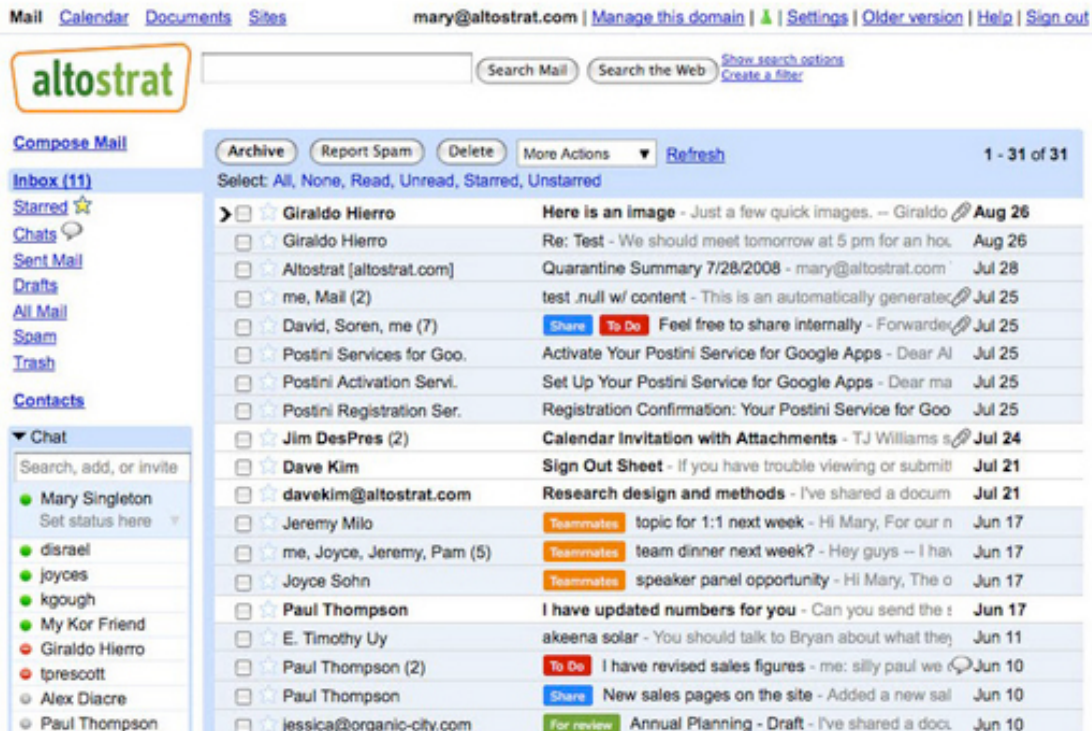


## The Small Business Guide to Google Apps

Google Apps for business has a number of benefits over traditional business IT and desktop software. Using the suite places all of your data and workflow in the cloud, meaning you can access it all at any time from anywhere with an Internet connection.

At £35 per year per user, the fully integrated apps system is certainly cost-effective when comparing it to the likes of Microsoft Office – especially when you take into account that includes automated backup, and even integrating the free versions of Gmail, Google Calendar, and Google Docs into your workflow can help keep your employees coordinated.

For more casual users, or those who might not be acquainted with Google Apps, here's a guide to how the software can benefit your small business.



### Email - Gmail (or GoogleMail)

The many powerful features of Gmail really make it a leap forward in the web-based e-mail space, and a lot of these are ideal for business.

If you're not ready to take the full plunge into the premium Google Apps suite, you can still configure the free edition to function as your business e-mail client through your existing domain name.

The first big advantage of Gmail, like all the apps discussed here, is that it functions in the cloud. You don't have to worry about downloading messages to multiple locations or syncing various devices. Your inbox will look the same from any web-enabled device, whether it's your desktop computer, your laptop or a mobile phone.

With 25 GB of e-mail storage per user (with a paid apps account / 7GB with a free account), it's unlikely you'll ever have to clean out your inbox or delete old messages. The premium accounts are also automatically backed up, so you'll never have to worry about losing any emails.

Gmail works a bit differently than traditional desktop clients and webmail services in that conversations are "threaded". This means that e-mails with the same or related subject lines are grouped together in a thread so you can see all the messages sent and received on a topic in one place. When a new message is received, the entire thread is bumped to the top of your inbox, making tracking complex and multi-party conversations easier to manage.

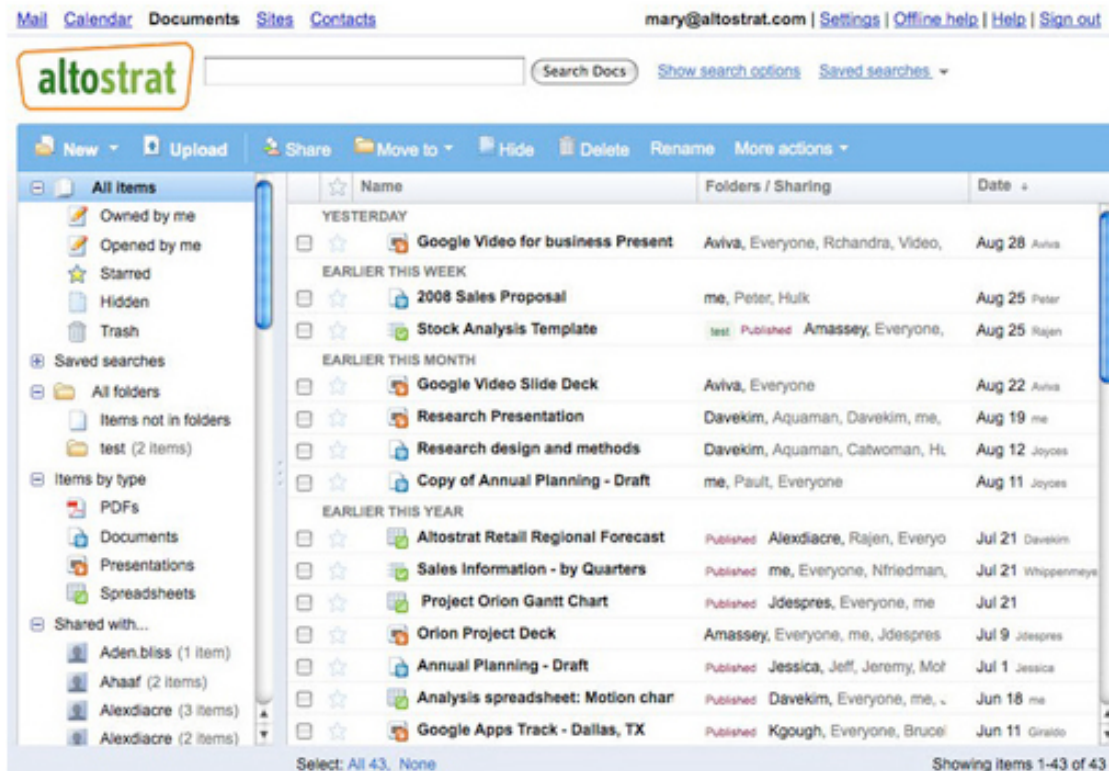
Gmail also has a chat feature built right into the interface that lets you send a quick update or discuss a project with an employee if you're not in the same office. Chats are also stored in Gmail so that you can search and refer to them later.

Google search, the asset that started it all for the company, is of course built right into Gmail, which makes finding information from e-mail conversations (even very old ones) extremely efficient.

Additionally, Gmail Labs offers some extra settings for your inbox that can be extremely valuable for business use:

- Signature Tweaks puts your e-mail signature before the quoted text in a reply the way that Outlook would.
- Default 'Reply to All' allows you to reply to group e-mails with one click, instead of from a drop-down menu.
- Forgotten Attachment Detector will notify you if you've mentioned an attachment in an e-mail, but forgotten to add one.
- Undo Send gives you a few seconds after sending a message to click "undo" in case you forgot something, or sent it to the wrong party by mistake.
- Title Tweaks is a great feature that puts your unread message count first in the title of the inbox web page. If you have many windows open while you're working, you'll still be able to see when new messages arrive.

## Documents, Spreadsheets and Presentations: Google Docs



Google Docs is a web-based suite for word processing (similar to Word), presentation building (like PowerPoint), spreadsheets (like Excel), and web forms. All the work is done in a web browser, and all the data is saved in the cloud.

The software can be a bit quirky at times, which may frustrate users of more stable products like Microsoft Office, but the payoff in online storage, shareability, and collaboration options may be worth the adjustment for many small businesses.

Because the data is online, streamlined document sharing and collaboration are big perks with Google Docs. Any file you're working on can be shared with individual team members, or the entire group within the apps system. You can also set permissions for specific users to view and edit documents. And, multiple users can simultaneously view and edit documents, which can be useful for real-time collaborative projects or presentations during conference calls. You can also grant permission for those outside your office network to view and edit documents, which can be especially useful for sharing information and presentations with clients or colleagues.

As you create and share documents, your Google Docs dashboard may start to get a little messy. Be sure to create folders to keep your work organized just as you would on your desktop. You can also share entire folders if you need to collaborate on multiple documents related to the same project.

The comparison between Google Docs and Microsoft Office is often made, below is a diagram recently published by the US PC magazine, PCWorld.

	Google Docs + Office 2003/2007	Office 2010
Required user licenses	Google Apps	Office 2010 <sup>1</sup> SharePoint 2010* SharePoint & Windows CALs *Currently on-premises only
Cost/license	\$50/user/year (Docs is included with Google Apps)	\$499 Office Professional Additional costs required for SharePoint 2010 software, CALs, and associated hardware
Server software (per server) <sup>4</sup>	None	Windows Server 2008 64-bit edition SQL Server 2008 Express Sharepoint 2010 <sup>2</sup>
Server hardware (per server) <sup>4</sup>	None	64-bit processor, four cores 8GB RAM 80 GB System Drive <sup>2</sup>
Synchronous server & datacenter replication	Included	Available* *Requires additional hardware and software configured by customer <sup>3</sup>
Store and share Office documents in the cloud	Yes (any filetype)	Yes* *Requires SharePoint
Real time collaboration on the web	Documents Spreadsheets Presentations Drawings	Excel only* (No indication of presence of co-editors) *Requires SharePoint 2010
Real time collaboration in desktop application	Available soon for Word, Excel, and PowerPoint 2003/2007 with DocVerse	Word* (Locked by paragraph, manual updates and refresh) PowerPoint* *Requires SharePoint 2010

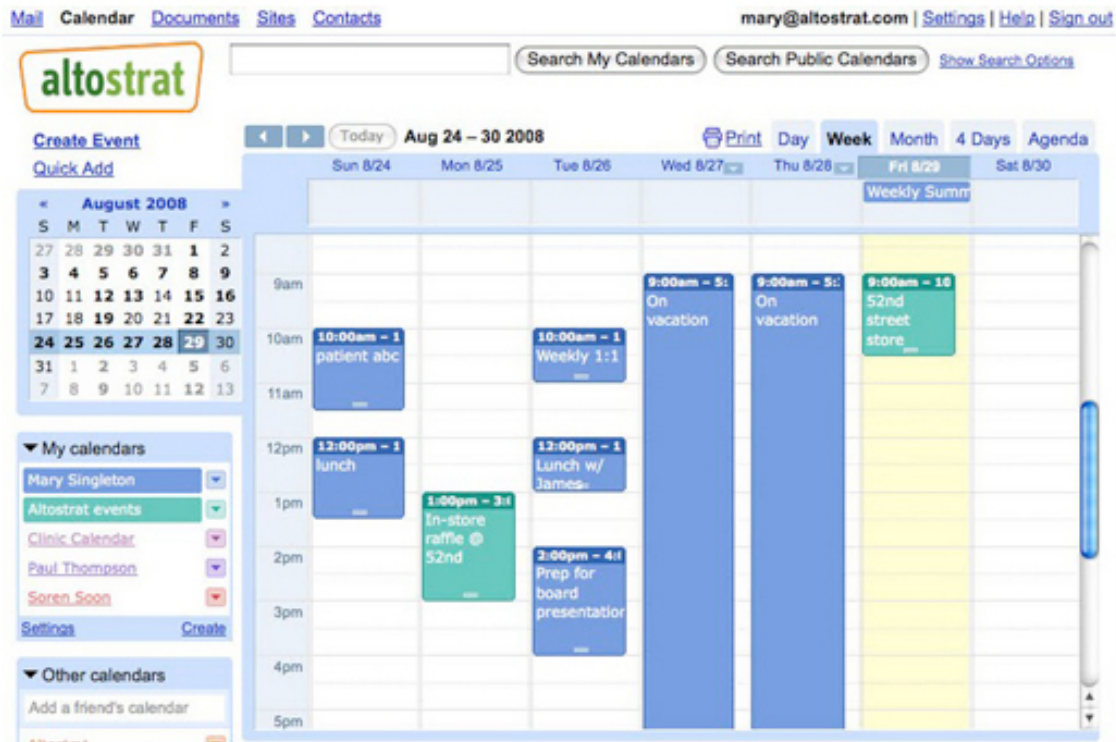
<sup>1</sup>For full requirements, see Deploy Office Web Apps from Microsoft TechNet (<http://bit.ly/9i7Rfh>)

<sup>2</sup>For full requirements, see SharePoint Requirements from Microsoft TechNet (<http://bit.ly/QzdQC>)

<sup>3</sup>For full requirements, see SharePoint Availability from Microsoft TechNet (<http://bit.ly/d1NXJz>)

<sup>4</sup>For full requirements, see SharePoint Performance and Capacity Management from Microsoft TechNet (<http://bit.ly/cjlkow>)

## Calenders - Google Calender



Google Calender provides an efficient and intuitive way to keep appointments and events synced across your entire business. With calendar sharing and permissions (similar to those in Docs), you can add other employees' calendars to your own, and vice versa, in order to see and manage the big picture of your team's time.

For example, if an executive has an assistant, their calendars may be shared so that the assistant could manage his boss's appointments remotely from his own account. It's also a smart tool for coordinating meetings, calls, and shift staffing for multiple employees to avoid scheduling conflicts. Sharing multiple calendars with one "master calendar" creates a color-coded scheduling table for the coordinator that updates automatically when users make changes or additions.

The Calendar app can also be used to create events through Gmail. By adding your employees' e-mail addresses to an event, they will receive an invitation to respond. Responding 'yes' automatically adds a shared event to your calendar that each invitee can view and add notes to. It's a smart way to coordinate meetings and keep everyone in the loop.