

# THE NATIONAL LAW REVIEW

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## Office 365 and Microsoft Office 2019 Breakdown for Law Firm

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Computers have changed drastically over the past few decades, but one of the primary constants has been Microsoft Office and its Office suite of applications. Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook (among others) have become as common as a keyboard and mouse when it comes to personal and professional computing for millions and millions of people, including attorneys.

As the offerings have changed and updated over the years, though, it has become increasingly difficult to determine exactly which version is best for a particular organization and its needs. Law firms, in particular, have very specific requirements at times. Microsoft Office's two most recent iterations, 365 and 2019, can both work well for their job demands, but there are significant yet often subtle differences.

### What's the Difference Between Office 365 and Microsoft Office 2019?

If only there were a little paperclip that popped up in life, as it once did for Microsoft Office, prompting us with questions and answers. Well, even if Clippit (or Clippy, as most people referred to him) doesn't do our bidding anymore, there is still much to celebrate in the Office suite of applications. Features and benefits abound.

Office 365, for starters, differs from Office 2019 in that it is a subscription service, while Office 2019 is a one-time purchase. Microsoft advertises 365 as the best way to make sure that your computers are updated with the latest version and security patches for the software. Tech support is also included. While there are home, personal and educational uses, law firms can integrate Office into their systems and workflow just as easily and beneficially.

In addition to Word, PowerPoint, and Excel, firms opting for 365 will also get access to online file storage and be able to connect to the cloud as well for collaboration amongst attorneys and other parties. As the service is a subscription, law firms can choose to pay monthly per user, or for the entire year upfront.

If one does not plan to upgrade their applications every year, they should probably go for Office 2019, as it does not include annual updates. Each license will allow them to download Word, Excel, and PowerPoint onto one user's machine, whether PC or Mac. Besides these two versions, Microsoft also now offers something called Office Online for the frugally minded. It is a free version of the Office suite for use in web browsers online with a Microsoft Office Account.

### Legal Professionals and Microsoft Office

Whichever version a firm opts for, there are specific benefits for the legal industry. For starters, attorney-client privilege must be maintained at all times. As documents and files are stored and shared, it is vital that these stay



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secure in the process. Microsoft Office works with enterprise-grade, industry compliant security measures: ISO 27001, EU Model clauses, HIPAA BAA, as well as FISMA. Lawyers can control permissions and access to each document on a case-by-case basis, and spam detection is [built right in so that phishing and malware attacks are much less likely to occur](#).

As security is paramount for law firms' integrity and reputation, so goes efficiency for their bottom line. Thankfully, Microsoft Office comes in handy here as well. The Office suite is a solution-oriented software package intended to lower overhead cost while simultaneously enabling attorneys to work longer with fewer frustrations (i.e., more billable hours), increase productivity, and with the 365 package, lawyers and their staff can work from anywhere as needed, employing the added cloud storage and online-based versions of the applications.

Further, Office 365 also supports Matter Center, a SharePoint solution for those in need of a legal document manager and collaborator. It is a straightforward, easy-to-use interface that allows legal professionals to work more intelligently and efficiently. The software itself is open source and available to download for free online, making it a win-win for all involved.

## **Summary**

Regardless of the option chosen, law firms can all benefit from Microsoft Office and the newest iteration of its applications. Whether via a one-time purchase, a subscription, or the free online-only suite, there is much to help attorneys work better and smarter along the way.

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