



Google Apps: an overview

What is Google Apps?

“Google Apps Education Edition is a broad IT solution that schools can use to bring communication and collaboration tools to the entire academic community for free. Google manages all the technology details, so you can focus your time, energy and budgets on teaching your kids.”

“Students, teachers and staff can share ideas more quickly and get things done more effectively when they have access to the same powerful communication and sharing tools. Google Apps Education Edition lets tech administrators provide email, sharable online calendars, instant messaging tools and even a dedicated website to faculty, students and staff for free. There's no hardware or software to install or maintain, since everything is delivered through a standard web browser -- anytime, from anyplace.”

How much does Google Apps cost?

It's free! Just as expensive CAD software, office suites and more are provided free to schools, so Google Apps Education Edition is available free-of-charge. The rationale behind these moves, of course, is so that the product becomes (or remains) industry-standard.

What can Google Apps do?

Google Apps Education Edition could help transform learning in an educational institution from being within-four-walls to happening anywhere! Students and staff can access their work and collaborate at the touch of a button from any place with an Internet connection. Shared calendars can keep staff, pupils and parents up-to-date with events and forthcoming deadlines. Pupils can easily share the results of their learning with the world!

Educational institutions can pick-and-choose from offering the following options:

What are the advantages of Google Apps?

Communicate and connect



Gmail

Email with 6.505497 GB of storage per custom email account, mail search tools and integrated chat.



Google Talk

Free text and voice calling around the world.



Google Calendar

Coordinate meetings and school events with sharable calendars.

Collaborate and publish



Start Page

Access your inbox, calendar, docs and campus info, plus search the web from one place.



Google Docs

Create, share and collaborate on documents in real-time.



Google Sites

One-stop sharing for team information.

Manage your services



Control Panel

Manage your domain and user accounts online.



Extensibility APIs

Integrate with your existing IT systems or 3rd party solutions.



Help and support

Online troubleshooting and extended hours phone support for critical issues.

Everything in one place: staff and students have everything they need in one place. It's installed on the institution's domain so the 'homepage' can be a pupil's/staff member's start page. A single sign-on suffices for all the functionality on offer.

Ease of communication & collaboration: contact details can be easily (and automatically) shared, staff and pupils can collaborate on documents, websites and presentations using Google's easy-to-use web-based software.

Low-maintenance: upgrades to software and new features can be made with one click, or automatically, depending on settings. Security risks are minimized using Google's enterprise-level servers.

It's free: Google Apps Education Edition is being used by educational institutions worldwide who are making savings vs. using commercial offerings. Although Google make a great deal of their revenue from advertising, there is none on the Google Apps Education Edition.

Technical support: Google offer free 24/7 support, including phone support for critical issues. There are also online support resources for frequently asked questions and potential problems.

Mobile access: Google Apps can be accessed via special stripped-down versions for mobile devices. This means that pupils and staff can access mail, documents, etc. via their PDA or mobile phone.

Do educational institutions have to use Google's solution for email?

An alternative to Google Apps Education Edition is Google Apps Team Edition. This allows users to sign themselves up using their school email address. They can then access the other collaborative features of Google Apps Education Edition.

Later, ICT administrators for the school's domain can take over to migrate email and take further control. Google Apps Team Edition allows educational institutions to 'test the water' before they roll it out school-wide.

Video of Google Apps Team Edition in action: http://www.google.com/apps/video/team_edition_video.html

Further reading:

★ **Google Apps Education Edition:-** http://www.google.com/educators/p_apps.html

★ **Wikipedia: Google Apps:-** http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Google_Apps

★ **Olchfa School, Wales:-** <http://olchfa.org.uk> (Google Apps accounts for all pupils/staff)

★ **Digital Geography: Google Apps - The Next Step:-** <http://www.digitalgeography.co.uk/archives/2007/10/google-apps-the-next-stage/>

★ **BBC News: Google's email for universities:-** <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/6741797.stm>

★ **Official Google Blog: One Year Mark for Google Apps Education Edition:-** <http://googleblog.blogspot.com/2007/10/one-year-mark-for-google-apps-education.html>

★ **Google@School: More Universities Announce Google Apps on Campus:-** http://www.google.com/intl/en/press/annc/google_at_school.html

★ **Google Goes To School:-** <http://searchengineland.com/070502-132457.php> (examples of schools/universities using Google Apps)