

# TOOLS of the TRADE



## Microsoft Office on iPad

Although it has taken much longer than expected, a suite of four Microsoft Office applications has arrived in Apple's App Store to run on the iPad: Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and OneNote. And it isn't betaware. You will also have to download the OneDrive app, a cloud storage locker for your Office files. The options for download are broad. You can download just the free apps, or you can get the whole store on your iPad and your PC or Mac. The free suite of apps work as readers, which will correctly display their assigned document types. If you want to edit or create new files and unlock the apps' full potential, you have to purchase an Office 365 subscription, which will cost you \$9.99 per month or \$99.99 per year. The sub-

scription also unlocks 27GB of space on OneDrive. The content there is reachable from any computer, and you can open folders in the cloud to share and collaborate with others. The license for the Office Home Premium package lets you use your suite apps on up to five tablets and five PCs or Macs. The computer programs will be full versions of the latest Word, Excel, PowerPoint, OneNote, Access, Publisher, and Outlook. The apps on the iPad are somewhat scaled down but are elegantly designed and surprisingly robust. The iPad apps require iOS 7.0 or later, and Microsoft is working on a suite for Android mobiles. Read more about the iPad's Microsoft Office Suite in TechForum and in Bill Jelen's Excel column. [www.microsoft.com/office](http://www.microsoft.com/office)

## Amazon Fire TV

With one of the largest inventories of movies and TV episodes (more than 200,000) available on its website, you knew Amazon would sooner or later challenge Roku, Apple TV, and Google's Chromecast for its own space on the living room couch.



Amazon describes its new Fire TV as a tiny box that plugs into your HDTV for easy and instant access to Netflix, Prime Instant Video, Hulu Plus, WatchESPN, Showtime Anytime, low-cost movie rentals, and more. The "more" includes viewing your own photos and videos, streaming your music library, and playing games such as Minecraft, Monsters University, The Game of Life, and Minion Rush. The box has a quad-core processor and graphics engine, and it streams in 1,080-pixel HD with dual-band, dual-antenna Wi-Fi and Dolby Digital Plus surround sound. The remote has voice search capabilities, which has inspired an odd series of ads featuring actor Gary Busey talking to inanimate objects. Simply click a button on the remote and mention an actor's or director's name, then it searches for all available content. There's a FreeTime feature that enables parents to control what their children watch, what time of the day they can watch it, and for

how long. It has a subscription option called FreeTime Unlimited, designed for kids aged 3-8, which provides unlimited access to thousands of movies and TV shows. You also have access to Second Screen, which lets you "fling" the movie or show from your Kindle Fire HDX to your TV. That will leave your tablet open for the X-Ray program to display information about the cast, music lists, trivia, character back-stories, and more from IMDb (Internet Movie Database).

[www.amazon.com/FireTV](http://www.amazon.com/FireTV)

## RollerMouse Red

Contour Design's RollerMouse Red was awarded the 2013 Red Dot Design Award for its revolutionary aluminum design and functionality. The 7SENSE™ tracking technology incorporates two cursor controls, a rollerbar, and a scroll wheel, creating an ergonomic mouse with surprising precision and control. Unlike a conventional mouse, the sensors inside the bar are sealed

# TECH FORUM

## Office Finally Arrives for the iPad

By Michael Castelluccio, Editor

The iPad has been around for four years, and the clamor for a native version of Microsoft Office on the device has been heard for almost as long. The delay has been so extended that when Microsoft finally announced an iPad version for its flagship Office product line, the commotion created by the debut was quite underwhelming. But not so in the App Store. In the first week after the March 27, 2014, release, Microsoft pointed to an impressive 12 million downloads, grabbing the top three spots as the most popular iPad apps—Word, Excel, and PowerPoint are downloaded as separate apps.

What took so long? There are a number of possible reasons. Perhaps we had to wait until former Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer cleared out his desk. Or it might have been a cultural thing, where the corporate indifference was really an aggressive resistance to joining the competition. The launch was, after all, the first for Microsoft's new CEO, Satya Nadella, who might be beginning to turn the massive corporate ship in a new direction—off the desktop and into the open seas of a cloud-first, mobile-first strategy. Or it might have been because the iPad needed a better operating system to support the suite. The new Office suite requires 7.0 or better, which wasn't released until September 18, 2013. Whatever the reason, you can now run fairly robust versions of Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and OneNote on your iPad.

But is Microsoft a day late and a dollar short? Certainly it's a day late, with the competition already firmly entrenched and offering much more attractive prices. The OpenOffice editor produces Microsoft Office-compatible documents on the iPad for \$19.99; Quickoffice and Documents to Go do the same for \$9.99; and new buyers of iPads get Apple's iWork suite (Pages, Numbers, and Keynote) for free. There also are countless other suites, some with respectable performance, and many are free.

Although the Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and OneNote apps are free to download *continued on next page*



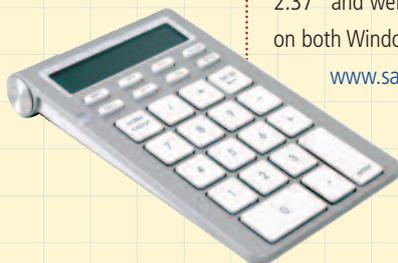
### Satechi Bluetooth Wireless Smart Keypad

away from dust and dirt. The textured bar has sensors to adjust speed and acceleration so the cursor remains centered. The mouse click motion is virtual, removing some of the strain of repetitive motion. The RollerMouse is placed in the center of the control keys, so there's no need to reach away to grab a mouse, which lets you keep both hands on the wrist rest. (There's an extended leatherette palm support that's also available.) The controls include copy and paste buttons at the top, with a cursor speed control button between them. Below that is a scroll wheel with a left-click and right-click set of buttons on either side. And below those, there's a one-touch, double-click button. You can customize the amount of pressure needed for the left and right click buttons and even the click volume. The RollerMouse is compatible with Windows and Mac computers.

[www.contour-design.com](http://www.contour-design.com)

Has this year's tax season taken a toll on your desk calculator? Perhaps it's time to upgrade to a calculator/keypad combination that can wirelessly connect to your computer or function as a standalone calculator. Satechi's neat, brushed aluminum, low-profile smart keypad connects to your computer or tablet through Bluetooth. The calculator mode features memory and backspace functions, and the keypad mode simplifies the entry of numbers and equations. If you're thinking about adding Microsoft's new Excel app to your iPad, this modestly priced keypad will speed up and increase your accuracy compared to the on-screen keypad that comes with the app. The keypad is styled like Apple's wireless keyboard, but its dimensions are slightly different. It measures 8.62" × 5.75" × 2.37" and weighs 12 oz. It runs on both Windows and Mac OS.

[www.satechi.net](http://www.satechi.net)



onto your iPad, they only let you view Office documents, not edit them or create new content. To activate these apps on your iPad, you need a Microsoft Office 365 account, available for home or business use. The cost for Office 365 Home Premium is either \$9.99 per month or \$99.99 for the year, renewable annually. (The Business subscription ranges in price depending on company size and number of users.) With the Home Premium's annual subscription, you can use the apps on up to five PCs or Macs and five tablets. You also get a generous 27GB of space of cloud storage on Microsoft's OneDrive.

### WHAT YOU'LL GET

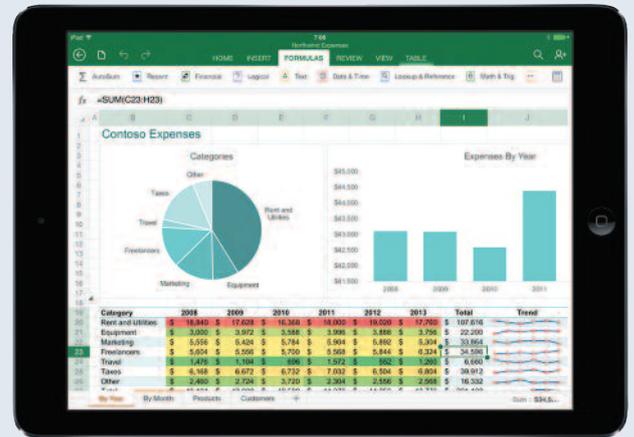
There are four basic packages: Office 365 Home, Home & Student, Professional, or Business. I'll continue to examine the Home Premium package. The \$99.99 annual subscription can be shared with up to four other members of your household, who can then download the Office applications on a PC, Mac, or iPad. The 2013 versions of Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and OneNote apps are available for both PC and Mac. Outlook, Publisher, and Access are only for Windows PCs. In addition to your hardware choices, you get Office on Demand, which lets you log in and use the Office apps on any other Internet-connected Windows PC—at the library, on your friend's computer, or wherever. Log off when you're done, and the program you were using disappears from the computer.

You can store your work on the PC or iPad on which you are working or send it to your OneDrive cloud storage account, which also is accessible from any Internet computer.

How well do the new Office apps work on the iPad? Well, this column was written using the Word app, on a page that's mostly text and white space. That's good because there isn't the normal jumble of toolbars at the top of the page. The toolbar has only five tabs on the top ribbon, with a thin white toolbar below it showing the icons available for that tab. For instance, the Insert tab includes page, breaks, table, pictures, shapes, text box, hyperlink, and footnotes. Actually, these tabs contain all the basic functions from fonts and styling to word count and markup. In the event you need some of the more obscure tools, remember that you have another copy of these programs on your PC or Mac, which are the complete programs.

### IPAD APP FEATURES

The Office apps on the iPad aren't designed by the principles that have overloaded the original Office programs with



features. The trade-off does offer some unique advantages for the smaller tablet space. The biggest of these are the touch controls inherent in tablets—tap and tap-and-hold for the magnifying glass, control for touch scrolling, and of course, pinch and zoom. And there's a clever function in PowerPoint for iPad that lets you touch the iPad's screen to produce a red-dot laser pointer that you can slide around the page on the tablet and the projected image.

There are missing features, however, and the lack of printer controls has produced the most frequent comments from buyers. Microsoft has already addressed this issue with a promise that a print button is on its way. The way that the apps save also is a little different. The default setting is to autosave to your OneDrive account. But you can turn that off, and a save button will appear that will save the file to your iPad. It's unclear if Microsoft will add a function that will allow you to save to DropBox, Evernote, or SugarSync accounts.

One more minor warning: I tested these programs on an iPad Air with an external Apple wireless keyboard. Anything that takes more than five minutes of keyboarding calls for an external keyboard. The Excel app on the iPad has a numeric keypad that pops up for easier typing than the top-row digits on the keyboard, but you're still tapping glass if you use it. In the Tools section this month, check out the Satechi Bluetooth Keypad. It's a nice alternative.

### ANDROID IS NEXT

So who is more likely to benefit from this coalition, Microsoft or Apple? Probably both, along with the legion of Office users who haven't found an adequate substitute for their work apps on their iPads. And for all those who own Android tablets, the good news is that a version of the Office suite is in the works for your platform. **SF**