



Church IT
Recommendations &
Best Practices



Leverage your Nonprofit Status

Google and Microsoft both offer Nonprofit plans. Both require you fill out paperwork and apply. If you are not on a nonprofit plan you need to switch because there are many benefits and associated solutions.

Best Practices

✓ Data Storage

Your data should be accessible to you in or out of the office. It should be secured and it should be backed up. Google and Microsoft both offer options to assist with “cloud” storage. Storing important files in one place or one computer is not a good practice.

✓ Phone Communications

If you have copper based phone lines you are likely paying too much and have limited capabilities. Move your phone system to the cloud. Some benefits include auto attendant, find-me follow-me, voicemail to email, pastoral care emergency hotline.

✓ Email solutions

Each user or church position should have a usable email address associated with your domain name. i.e. - music@sjcathedral.org. Using free email such as @gmail, @aol, @msn for church business is not a good idea.

✓ Internet Connectivity

Your internet connection should be robust enough to allow you to work effectively. Upload speeds are equally important as download speeds. You need to review your internet contract to ensure you are in the correct internet package and taking advantage of the best offers.

✓ Network Security & Virus

You need to be using anti-virus software and it needs to be updated automatically and monitored. Norton and McAfee software tend to slow down computer performance. Using free anti-virus software is a bad idea. Using the built-in anti-virus and firewall is better than no anti-virus / firewall but there are better options available.

✓ PC and Server Hardware

If your computer is 5 years old you should consider replacing it. Running old computers often results in costly recovery and repairs. Old computers cannot take advantage of operating system and security upgrades.

Recommendations

✓ Operating System

It doesn't matter if you are running Windows or MacOS. The most important thing is that you are taking your security updates regularly. Updates should be setup to be automatic. Remember, software updates fix security flaws.

✓ Microsoft Office Products

Microsoft Word, Excel, Power Point and Publisher are the most frequent file formats we see exchanged and should be your standard.

✓ Documentation

Important passwords and other items related to your organization should be documented so if there is a computer failure the information can be retrieved and recovered.

✓ Wireless Connectivity

Your wireless network needs to be secure and should allow access throughout your building. This may involve adding multiple access points that can be centrally managed. The plug in wall adapters generally do not offer a good experience.

✓ Spam and email phishing

Email phishing and spam are widespread. Email phishing schemes are all about stealing your password so that they can continue their campaign. Learn to identify the tell-tale signs and avoid the threat. Malware and Ransomware attacks generally originate from an email.

✓ Web Security

With web filtering, your firewall can block malicious websites and control access to legitimate website categories. There are several ways to achieve web filtering but it is more effective at the firewall level.

Microsoft Office 365 for Nonprofits

Pros

- *Office suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint etc.) – you get the latest version of all applications available both via the web and also as installed apps on your PC, Laptop, Mac, or mobile device.*
- *Exchange Online – If integrating with Microsoft Outlook, you can now access email, shared calendars, contacts and tasks without the need for an on-premise Exchange server. This means you can also access them from practically anywhere in the world.*
- *Microsoft OneDrive included – easy to share data with other persons using a Microsoft based account.*
- *Microsoft Teams included - a messaging app for your organization - a workspace for real-time collaboration and communication, meetings, file and app sharing.*

Cons

- *Subscription based - Microsoft 365 Business Standard (Nonprofit Staff Pricing) - \$3.00 user/month*
- *Office 365 rolls out updates and features regularly. If you have a workforce that is slow to adapt to changes, Office 365 might cause problems.*
- *Admin console can be intimidating and frustrating for non-IT persons.*
- *Storing Your Data on the Cloud Makes It More Vulnerable to Security Threats*

Google Workspace for Nonprofits

Pros

- *Email interface looks like Gmail.*
- *Google Drive – easy to share data with other persons using a Google based account.*
- *No Cost.*

Cons

- *Email interface looks like Gmail.*
- *Google Drive can be confusing for some persons.*
- *Still might need a Microsoft Office license because Google Docs and Sheets have limited capabilities.*
- *Support is non-existent. You often will have to use online support groups to ask questions and get answers.*
- *Admin console can be intimidating and frustrating for non-IT persons.*
- *Privacy Policy is open for interpretation.*
- *Storing Your Data on the Cloud Makes It More Vulnerable to Security Threats.*

Internet

Internet locator

- <https://broadbandmap.fcc.gov>

Internet Speed Test

- <https://www.speedtest.net>

Nonprofit Portals



Microsoft Non-Profit

<https://nonprofit.microsoft.com>



Google Non-Profit

<https://www.google.com/nonprofits>



Techsoup

<https://www.techsoup.org>

THANK YOU!



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