

Advice from Middle Aged Female Tech
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I have been in the industry with my own company since 1994. The entire time I have worked in this field there have been very few times any two techs ever agree completely. The advice I give here is based on my experiences, testing, and what I know works or to be true.

Office 2013

An alarming story about Office 2013 is flying around the Web: Once you install a retail copy of Microsoft Office 2013, you can never install it on another PC without paying Microsoft for a whole new license. Microsoft has tweaked the license agreement for Office 2013. For Office 2010 (the previous version) it read as follows: *"You may reassign the license to a different device any number of times, but not more than one time every 90 days. If you reassign, that other device becomes the 'licensed device.' If you retire the licensed device due to hardware failure, you may reassign the license sooner."*

That "reassignment" clause is gone from Office 2013's license agreement. In many places, the agreement now states, *"Our software license is permanently assigned to the licensed computer."* This restriction is made enforceable during the registration process. When you enter that lengthy registration key during installation, it is combined with data gathered from your computer's hardware to create a unique activation code that essentially says, "This copy of Office (identified by the registration key) is valid only on this machine (identified by the data collected from the machine)."

The activation code is transmitted to Microsoft and checked during each attempt to re-install Office 2013. If the machine changes, the new activation code won't match the one that Microsoft has, and the installation will fail.

But here is the secret: You can erase Microsoft's record of that activation code, then your copy of Office 2013 is *not "assigned"* to any computer; *it's as if Office has never been installed.* You can install it on a new or modified PC. This is how to accomplish this erasure (*without any hacking skills*).

Go to the Office 2013 Web site, log in to the account you created during your online purchase or registration, and erase your activation code yourself. See that "download/install" button in the lower-right part of the screen? After activation, it switches to something like "deactivate your license." Click that button, follow instructions, and you're free to install Office 2013 on a new PC.

Other free office software alternatives include Libre Office, *my personal favorite*, which is well regarded by many professionals, and is improving rapidly. Google Docs is all the word processor that many home and student users need.

There are other alternatives to Office 2013 and Office 365, of course, if you bought a new computer in the past few years, it probably came with the Office Starter Edition, it was free, but **ads** appeared on the screen. *Microsoft hoped people would pay to upgrade to the full Office suite, but apparently not many*

did so. Office Web Apps is the replacement for Office Starter Edition. It's a free web-based service that offers word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation modules very similar to Office.

Now, keep in mind that if you're satisfied with an older version of Office, **there is no compelling reason to upgrade.** I still use Office 2010 on one of my desktop PCs, and it works fine.

I am always about saving money and not spending it on things you don't need to
Remember ANY questions, email me at: **Montgomery@Hollyecho.com**. If possible, I will include the answer to your questions in my next article.