

Ebay Office Licenses

1 Overview

I needed to upgrade some computers, and this is what I found with office. Ebay has many cheap licenses, but there are all kinds of catches, and a few different licenses being sold, not to mention different editions...

2 Retail

If you go to a retail store, 1st, you have to get office with Outlook. Everyone uses outlook. I don't know why. Thunderbird is fine. But people are dumb. Outlook is the easiest thing to wean people off of, as there's no requirement to use it.

If you go to retail, the edition with outlook (in 2020, Home and Business, is what its called) is \$230. They give you a keycard. Literally, printing money is what they do. It's for one copy.

If you get a CD/DVD, you used to be able to use it for 2 installs. Officially it was 1, but you could do 2 before it stopped you.

I won't get into the subscription version, but subscription is about \$100 a year, for 5 devices under one person*¹

So you can go to retail and get fucked (excuse my french). Don't do that. You can do better online.

3 Breakdown of Ebay

So we go to ebay to buy licenses. However, there are traps here as well. First off, buy from vetted sellers. Some accounts are made up very recently (I found one made yesterday) with seemingly unreal prices (\$5.00 for a license) and that is probably just a scam.

However, keep in mind that you don't necessarily have to pay a lot for a license. Here's the types of office available.

¹This is subject to change, as people are just using it for 5 different people's computers. Just wait, they will clamp down. It's actually a competitive deal now, but it's a trap. Not to mention, it's a recurring fee. BAD.

3.1 DVD and Product Key

This is a good one, as you can probably get two installs off of it. However these are more expensive. Also, the DVDs or keys may just be counterfeit from China anyways. They are all over counterfeiting these, no doubt. The money is there. So this is an option, but maybe not the best.

3.2 Download and Key

This gets complex. There are downloads with official ms links, and some with unofficial links. There are keys that require phone activation, and some that don't. Don't get one that req's phone activation. Although, it looks like I accidentally bought a phone activation one, and you can do it online technically, though its called phone activation. You don't actually talk to a human being though. All websites.

Try to get one with an official MS link. I bought one with an unofficial link (mistake) so I checked the iso download with virustotal. It checked out clean. That's the best I could do. I tried to install the official ISO image for the same edition but here's another trap. I had the iso for normal office, and the key I had was only valid for the Volume License ISO. That is a TRAP, and evil. So I was forced to download the other ISO. Licensing is how this company prints free money, so it's very complex.

3.3 Key only with office.com acct

There are also some options that offer only a key. Then you can sign into office.com and assign the key to an email address. These are great. Get these if you can, as you can download the ISO later on, and also deactivate, and activate it on your computer as needed. There is a danger they will someday just 'not support' old Office, and that would be evil, but for now, you get an official license that is guaranteed to be valid. It's active on the website. They can't assign it to someone else.

3.4 Where to find Downloads?

Let's say you get a key, and they offer a download. You can search online, and there are often official ISOs available from official urls on the internet. Although by the time you read this, this fact may have changed.

3.4.1 Return Policy

Oh, and make sure the seller allows returns. Some do not.

4 Conclusion

Use libreoffice whenever possible. If you can't, go to ebay and buy licenses there. It will take some time, so grab some popcorn, and watch your spite rise.

Afterward: ebay is not ideal, but at least it 'can' work 'sometimes'. It really shouldn't be used for anything important. But, taking a \$20 chance, is better than a \$200 dive.

Generally, I purchase official copies when possible, so I don't have to deal with this nonsense. But, if the customer doesn't have a budget, then it's this or libreoffice.