BVCC General Meeting

July 13, 2020

"Introduction to Google Docs (& Drive)"
Joel Ewing, BVCC

See http://BVComputerClub.org
for Bits & Bytes Newsletter, meeting information,
Help Sessions & class information

"Office" Suites

- **Productivity tools for creating documents, presentations and spreadsheets**
  - **MS Office and Office365 (Word, PowerPoint, Excel)**
  - **LibreOffice & Open Office (Writer, Impress, Calc) (free)**
  - **Google Docs, Slides, and Sheets (free) – designed for on-line use and cloud document storage – integrated with Google Drive cloud storage**

Different Design Approaches

- **Files and application programs on local computer: MS Office, LibreOffice, OpenOffice**

- **Files and application programs on servers on the Internet, accessed through a web browser: MS Office365 (mostly); Google Docs, Sheets, and Slides (must use Chrome browser)**

Hybrid Approaches

- **Office365 has option to have local computer applications for Word, PowerPoint, and Excel for offline work**

- **Google Docs/Slides/Sheets provides way to sync Drive files with a local directory and manipulate files offline using an extension to the Chrome Browser.**

- **Both provide ways to upload/download files to/from cloud storage in forms recognized by common office suites – e.g., LibreOffice or MS Office**

Advantages of Web-Based Approach

- **Can access and edit your files from many different devices**

- **Simpler to share files and collaborate with others**

- **Not necessary to install applications on every device needing update-capability to files**

- **New releases of the applications automatically become available**

Dis-Advantages of Web-Based Approach

- **May not be able to access files when offline unless you have planned ahead to insure local copies in usable formats.**

- **The free Google office applications currently have fewer features than either MS Office or LibreOffice, and have lower limits on the size and complexity of documents that can be created – may not be an issue for many users**

- **Auto-updating to new versions not under user control**

Approaches for Offline Editing

- **Maintaining a synchronized local copy of files with an application capable of viewing or editing (Chrome Browser extensions, Chromebooks Chrome-OS built-in viewer)**

- **Exporting or Downloading files in a format understood by locally-installed apps (MS Office, LibrOffice, etc.)**

Possible Compatibility Issues

- **Although Google Docs, Sheets, Slides can read and produce file formats compatible and usable with MS Office and LibreOffice, 100% compatibility with those applications should not be expected.**

- **Important documents generated with the Google apps that will be used in different environments (viewed by different applications on different Operating Systems) should either be tested in the target environment to be sure there are no serious compatibility issues, or exported to others in a universal format that fixes the physical appearance (like PDF).**

Google Drive

- **Since the Google office apps by default read and write files using your Google Drive space, we need to start by looking at the basic usage of Google Drive.**

- **If you have a gmail account, you have 15 GB of free cloud storage at Google (email storage shares space with Drive).**

- **https://drive.google.com will go directly to Drive – use your same login as email. Should be a "Getting Started" PDF guide that tells how to set up file syncing on a PC or Mac (no app for Linux, but can still upload/download using browser and web site).**