

Personal Use vs. Sharing Content

There are no limitations for your personal use of Google Apps. As much as you're able, feel free to take notes, prepare course materials, and work on projects. However, before sharing content or collaborating using Google Apps, it's important to understand that some users with disabilities may have access problems. Consuming information or participating in an activity may be difficult or impossible, in some cases. Google has made significant improvements to the accessibility of their products, but it's important to have a plan to use alternative applications or provide information in an alternative format, in the event someone has access problems.

Alternatives to Google Apps

Google App	Alternatives	Notes
Gmail	Outlook, Apple Mail	Gmail can be configured to work with mail clients like Outlook and Apple Mail. Students, faculty, or staff may contact Help Desk Central at 979.845.8300 or helpdesk@tamu.edu for assistance in setting up the client interface for Gmail.
Google Calendar	Outlook, Apple Calendar	Google Calendar can be configured to work with mail or calendar clients like Outlook and Apple Calendar. Students, faculty, or staff may contact Help Desk Central at 979.845.8300 or helpdesk@tamu.edu for assistance in setting up the client interface for Google Calendar.
Google Hangouts	Skype	Google Hangouts functions well with many assistive tools. The biggest potential barrier will be for deaf and hard of hearing users. For those individuals, Hangout participants should use the chat feature to type everything that is said. Alternatively, a sign language interpreter can be included as one of the Hangout participants, and Google provides a plugin to facilitate this: Sign Language Interpreter app .
Google Drive	Email attachments, Blackboard Learn, website hosting	Google Drive works well with many assistive tools, and it's unlikely that users will encounter access barriers to downloading, uploading, and sharing documents. However, for individuals who have problems, traditional file sharing tools can be used. For example, documents can be hosted for download on Blackboard Learn, emailed as attachments, or hosted for download on a website.
Google Docs	Microsoft Word	Content in Google Docs can be copy/pasted into Microsoft Word, and Word documents can be uploaded to Google Drive. Docs can also be downloaded directly from Google Drive as Word files.
Google Sheets	Microsoft Excel	Content in Google Sheets can be copy/pasted into Microsoft Excel, and Excel documents can be uploaded to Google Drive. Sheets can also be downloaded directly from Drive as Excel files.
Google Slides	Microsoft PowerPoint	Content in Google Slides can be copy/pasted into Microsoft PowerPoint, and PowerPoint documents can be uploaded to Google Drive. Slides can also be downloaded directly from Drive into as PowerPoint files.
Google Sites	WordPress, other web authoring tools	Overall, the site building tools in Google Sites are not conducive for building accessible websites. In many cases, it's better to avoid the site building tools and use the HTML editor in Google Sites to create content. Even still, there are some technical limitations that prevent creating a fully accessible website (most notably for data tables). Alternatively, one can use any number of the popular web content management systems on campus. Platforms like WordPress, Cascade, and Drupal etc. don't impose the same technical limitations as Google Sites.