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Microsoft to offer Windows online

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0907/090715-office.html>

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15th July, 2009

THE ARTICLE

Microsoft has announced plans for a free web-based version of its popular Office software. From 2010, computer users will be able to use software such as Windows, Excel and PowerPoint on the Internet. Analysts believe Microsoft has to go online to compete against similar software offered by Google. One expert said: "Microsoft was forced to provide a free product" because of Google Docs, a free, online document and spreadsheet editing programme. The Web-based version of the Office suite will be available next year. There is an intense rivalry between Google and Microsoft. Google has the lion's share of the search market. Google hopes its Chrome browser will lure people away from Microsoft's Internet Explorer.

Microsoft's latest announcement has raised eyebrows in the technology world. Analysts are surprised it is giving away a free version of one of its most profitable products. They say the software giant looks like it is shooting itself in the foot. The Office suite made \$9.3 billion in profit from \$14.3 billion in total software sales in 2009. Free versions of Office will surely put a dent in these figures. A Microsoft Office spokesperson, Chris Bryant, said the free version was responding to customer needs, saying: "It's something our users have said they'd like." The Web version of Office 2010 does not yet have a name, but it will have advertising. There will be five different versions on sale for personal, small business and corporate use.

WARM-UPS

1. MICROSOFT: Walk around the class and talk to other students about Microsoft. Change partners often. Sit with your first partner(s) and share your findings.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

announcing plans / software / online / experts / free products / rivalry / online search / announcements / eyebrows / profitable / responding to customer needs / names

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. SOFTWARE: What software do you use? Complete this table. Talk about what you wrote with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you heard.

	The best?	Good and bad points?
Documents		
Spreadsheets		
Presentations		
Browser		
Chat		
Downloading		

4. THE BEST: Students A **strongly** believe Microsoft is the greatest technology company ever; Students B **strongly** believe another company is. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

5. RIVALRIES: Which of these rivals is best and why? Talk about this with your partner. Change partners and share your findings.

- Microsoft / Apple
- Microsoft Bing/ Google Search
- Microsoft X Box / Sony PlayStation
- Hotmail / G-Mail
- iTunes / Pirate Bay
- Nokia / Sony Ericsson / Motorola
- Firefox / Explorer / Chrome
- FaceBook / Twitter

6. INTERNET: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'Internet'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. Microsoft is to stop selling its Office software and put it online for free. T / F
- b. Microsoft faces no competition for products such as Word and Excel. T / F
- c. Google's share of the Internet search market is bigger than Microsoft's. T / F
- d. Google wants more people to use Internet Explorer. T / F
- e. Microsoft's recent announcement surprised many in the tech industry. T / F
- f. Many believe giving away a free version of its Office suite is a mistake. T / F
- g. Microsoft users expressed no preference for a free version of Office. T / F
- h. A new version of Office 2010 will be called "Office Five". T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. announced | a. offered for purchase |
| 2. version | b. tempt |
| 3. expert | c. edition |
| 4. the lion's share | d. money-making |
| 5. lure | e. reacting |
| 6. raised eyebrows | f. made public |
| 7. profitable | g. the most |
| 8. dent | h. surprised |
| 9. responding | i. specialist |
| 10. on sale | j. cut |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 1. Microsoft has announced plans | a. similar software |
| 2. Analysts believe Microsoft has | b. in the foot |
| 3. compete against | c. eyebrows |
| 4. an intense | d. for a free web-based version |
| 5. lure people | e. in these figures |
| 6. Microsoft's latest announcement has raised | f. rivalry |
| 7. giving away | g. away |
| 8. shooting itself | h. customer needs |
| 9. put a dent | i. to go online |
| 10. responding to | j. a free version |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Microsoft has announced plans for a free web-_____ version of its popular Office software. From 2010, computer users will be able to use software _____ as Windows, Excel and PowerPoint on the Internet. Analysts believe Microsoft has to go online to compete _____ similar software offered by Google. One expert said: "Microsoft was _____ to provide a free product" because of Google Docs, a free, online document and spreadsheet editing programme. The Web-based version of the Office _____ will be available next year. There is an intense _____ between Google and Microsoft. Google has the lion's _____ of the search market. Google _____ its Chrome browser will lure people away from Microsoft's Internet Explorer.

against
hopes
forced
rivalry
based
such
share
suite

Microsoft's latest announcement has _____ eyebrows in the technology world. Analysts are surprised it is _____ away a free version of one of its most profitable products. They say the software giant looks like it is _____ itself in the foot. The Office suite made \$9.3 billion in _____ from \$14.3 billion in total software sales in 2009. Free versions of Office will surely put a dent in these _____. A Microsoft Office spokesperson, Chris Bryant, said the free version was responding to customer _____, saying: "It's something our users have said they'd like." The Web version of Office 2010 does not yet have a _____, but it will have advertising. There will be five different versions on _____ for personal, small business and corporate use.

shooting
name
figures
giving
sale
raised
profit
needs

LISTENING: Listen and fill in the gaps.

Microsoft has announced _____ web-based version of its popular Office software. From 2010, computer users _____ software such as Windows, Excel and PowerPoint on the Internet. Analysts believe Microsoft _____ to compete against similar software offered by Google. One expert said: "Microsoft was _____ a free product" because of Google Docs, a free, online document and spreadsheet editing programme. The Web-based version of the Office suite will be available next year. There is _____ between Google and Microsoft. Google has the lion's share of the search market. Google hopes its Chrome browser will _____ from Microsoft's Internet Explorer.

Microsoft's latest announcement has _____ the technology world. Analysts are surprised it is giving away a free version of one of its most profitable products. They say the software giant looks _____ itself in the foot. The Office suite made \$9.3 billion in profit from \$14.3 billion in total software sales in 2009. Free versions of Office will surely _____ these figures. A Microsoft Office spokesperson, Chris Bryant, said the free version _____ customer needs, saying: "It's something our users have said they'd like." The Web version of Office 2010 does _____ name, but it will have advertising. There will be five different versions _____, small business and corporate use.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'software' and 'giant'.

software	giant
-----------------	--------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• announced• analysts• forced• available• share• lure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• eyebrows• profitable• foot• dent• needs• five
--	--

STUDENT MICROSOFT SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about Microsoft in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

MICROSOFT DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'software'?
- c) Are you excited about Microsoft's plans for an online version of Office?
- d) What part does Microsoft play in your life?
- e) What do you think of Microsoft's products?
- f) Which is better, Microsoft or Google?
- g) Do you have any loyalty towards Microsoft or its products?
- h) Do you think the name 'Microsoft' is a good name?
- i) Why does Google and not Microsoft have the lion's share of the Internet search market?
- j) What do you think of the rivalry between Microsoft and Google?

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MICROSOFT DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) What do you know about Microsoft?
- c) When was the last time you raised eyebrows?
- d) Is Microsoft shooting itself in the foot by offering a free version of Office online?
- e) What would happen if Microsoft did not offer a free online version of Office?
- f) In what other ways should Microsoft respond to its customers' needs?
- g) What would be a good name for the 2010 version of Microsoft Office?
- h) What's the point of offering five different versions of Office plus an online version?
- i) Do you think Microsoft will ever disappear?
- j) What questions would you like to ask Microsoft's CEO?

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LANGUAGE

Microsoft has (1) _____ plans for a free web-based version of its popular Office software. From 2010, computer users will be able to use software such as Windows, Excel and PowerPoint on the Internet. Analysts (2) _____ Microsoft has to go online to compete (3) _____ similar software offered by Google. One expert said: "Microsoft was (4) _____ to provide a free product" because of Google Docs, a free, online document and spreadsheet editing programme. The Web-based version of the Office suite will be available next year. There is an intense (5) _____ between Google and Microsoft. Google has the lion's share of the search market. Google hopes its Chrome browser will lure people (6) _____ from Microsoft's Internet Explorer.

Microsoft's latest announcement has raised (7) _____ in the technology world. Analysts are surprised it is giving away a free version of one of its most profitable products. They say the software giant looks like it is (8) _____ itself in the foot. The Office suite made \$9.3 billion (9) _____ profit from \$14.3 billion in total software sales in 2009. Free versions of Office will surely put a dent in these (10) _____. A Microsoft Office spokesperson, Chris Bryant, said the free version was responding to (11) _____ needs, saying: "It's something our users have said they'd like." The Web version of Office 2010 does not yet have a name, but it will have advertising. There will be five different versions (12) _____ sale for personal, small business and corporate use.

Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- | | | | | |
|-----|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| 1. | (a) announce | (b) announces | (c) announcing | (d) announced |
| 2. | (a) belief | (b) believe | (c) beliefs | (d) believing |
| 3. | (a) against | (b) via | (c) up | (d) for |
| 4. | (a) provision | (b) provider | (c) provide | (d) providing |
| 5. | (a) rivals | (b) rivaled | (c) rivalry | (d) rivaling |
| 6. | (a) to | (b) away | (c) come | (d) up |
| 7. | (a) eyebrows | (b) eyelashes | (c) eyelids | (d) eyeballs |
| 8. | (a) shot | (b) shoot | (c) shoots | (d) shooting |
| 9. | (a) on | (b) in | (c) to | (d) of |
| 10. | (a) numerals | (b) quantities | (c) maths | (d) figures |
| 11. | (a) customer's | (b) customers | (c) customer | (d) customize |
| 12. | (a) on | (b) in | (c) between | (d) from |

HOMework

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find out more about Microsoft. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. MICROSOFT: Make a poster about Microsoft. Include a variety of its different products and their rivals. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. RIVALRY: Write a magazine article about Microsoft. Include imaginary interviews with one person who loves the company and another who hates it.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

5. LETTER: Write a letter to the boss of Microsoft. Ask him three questions about the company. Make three suggestions how he could make Microsoft better. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F b. F c. T d. F e. T f. T g. F h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. announced | a. made public |
| 2. version | b. edition |
| 3. expert | c. specialist |
| 4. the lion's share | d. the most |
| 5. lure | e. tempt |
| 6. raised eyebrows | f. surprised |
| 7. profitable | g. money-making |
| 8. dent | h. cut |
| 9. responding | i. reacting |
| 10. on sale | j. offered for purchase |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 1. Microsoft has announced plans | a. for a free web-based version |
| 2. Analysts believe Microsoft has | b. to go online |
| 3. compete against | c. similar software |
| 4. an intense | d. rivalry |
| 5. lure people | e. away |
| 6. Microsoft's latest announcement has raised | f. eyebrows |
| 7. giving away | g. a free version |
| 8. shooting itself | h. in the foot |
| 9. put a dent | i. in these figures |
| 10. responding to | j. customer needs |

GAP FILL:

Microsoft to offer Windows online

Microsoft has announced plans for a free web-based version of its popular Office software. From 2010, computer users will be able to use software **such** as Windows, Excel and PowerPoint on the Internet. Analysts believe Microsoft has to go online to compete **against** similar software offered by Google. One expert said: "Microsoft was **forced** to provide a free product" because of Google Docs, a free, online document and spreadsheet editing programme. The Web-based version of the Office **suite** will be available next year. There is an intense **rivalry** between Google and Microsoft. Google has the lion's **share** of the search market. Google **hopes** its Chrome browser will lure people away from Microsoft's Internet Explorer.

Microsoft's latest announcement has **raised** eyebrows in the technology world. Analysts are surprised it is **giving** away a free version of one of its most profitable products. They say the software giant looks like it is **shooting** itself in the foot. The Office suite made \$9.3 billion in **profit** from \$14.3 billion in total software sales in 2009. Free versions of Office will surely put a dent in these **figures**. A Microsoft Office spokesperson, Chris Bryant, said the free version was responding to customer **needs**, saying: "It's something our users have said they'd like." The Web version of Office 2010 does not yet have a **name**, but it will have advertising. There will be five different versions on **sale** for personal, small business and corporate use.

LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - d 2 - b 3 - a 4 - c 5 - c 6 - b 7 - a 8 - d 9 - b 10 - d 11 - c 12 - a