

Rules for Office 2.0

No client application other than a web browser

This is the essence of Office 2.0: one should be able to perform most office productivity tasks without having to use any client application other than a web browser. That means no email client, no word processor, no spreadsheet editor, no presentation tool. Nothing but a web browser.

No files on personal computer

Once all your applications are online, it makes sense to leave your files there too. You can use a combination of services to manage the different types of files that you produce and consume. Very soon, the 'Documents' folder on your personal hard drive will be empty, and you should leave it that way.

No browser extension or plugin

For reasons explained in this [article](#), browser extensions and other plugins should be avoided at all cost. If two services offer the same functionality, but one requires an extension and the other does not, the later should be preferred, even if that means losing a couple features along the way.

Collaboration features are good

Part of the value of storing your data online is that it enables collaboration with other people, as described in this [article](#). For this reason, services that support document sharing and publishing will always get our preference over services that keep data to ourselves only, as long as they do it in a secure manner.

Syndication is the way to go

Beyond peer-to-peer collaboration, syndication opens the door to social cooperation. This really is the essence of Web 2.0, and Office 2.0 should benefit from it as much as possible. Syndication also provides the mechanisms that are required for integrating multiple services with each other, as described in this [article](#). As a result, services that offer RSS feeds and REST APIs always get our vote over ones that do not.

Competition brings alternatives

When your applications are installed on your personal computer, you're pretty much in charge of your own destiny -- that is, until you lose the aforementioned computer. But when all your applications are served by online service providers, they better keep serving it without too much disruption, or you're at risk of losing the productivity gains that you managed to achieve by going online. For this reason, we never use any services for which there is no good-enough alternative offered by a competitor. If Salesforce.com goes out of business (unlikely), we could always switch to NetSuite. If Google becomes evil, we can move from Gmail to Yahoo! Mail. Look for the hedge!

Data import/export is mandatory

Migrating from one service to another is possible only if all data can be exported from the first, then imported into the second. This is why we never use any services for which we cannot get data in and out easily. It's also required for implementing a reliable distributed backup infrastructure.