

**Parent Responses from Survey given by Barton Clark to members of our community regarding thoughts on Student “tech literacy” and specifically, the importance of students learning to use Microsoft Word and Excel.**

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*Below is the text of the letter I have been sending to parents for each of the last several years. Below you’ll find a simple pie-chart illustrating the breakdown of MS Office Usage as well as parent feedback directly.*

Hi parents and guardians!

I'm doing a bit of "research" with this email.. I'm curious how many of you use computers "on the job" or as part of your daily life.. and specifically use the programs called MS Word or MS Excel (or variants).

I'm asking because I'm seeing more and more students with little to no experience in either program (they all use Google Docs these days, which have much more limited feature sets (at present) than the full blown programs of Word and Excel). Using headers, tables of contents, formatting options, etc. in Word and setting up spread sheets, writing math functions, determining best fit curves in Excel (in my opinion) are all still valuable skills to have (especially in fields such as science, engineering, architecture, finance, etc).. but perhaps I'm wrong..

So.. the \$64k question: Do YOU use these programs/features in your jobs or life adventures? Is it still worth it for students to learn these? If so.. would you mind telling me the following:

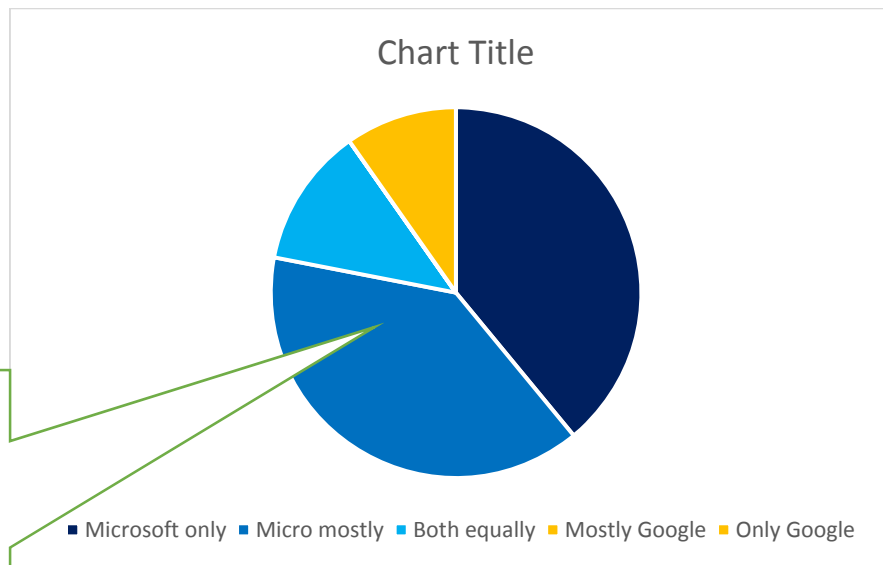
- Your profession (general description)
- Programs/features you use.
- General thoughts on the importance of students developing these skills.

Thanks in advance to all that reply!

B.

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Microsoft only	16
Micro mostly	16
Both equally	5
Mostly Google	0
Only Google	4
	41



*You’ll notice that nearly 80% of respondents across all industries, businesses and careers use Microsoft products either exclusively or mostly. (the two blue slices of this pie).*

*Granted, this is a ‘small’ data set.. I’ll point out that I’ve been giving this survey for several years, primarily to encourage other teachers to incorporate teaching skills in their classes, in addition to Google skills. I never imagined that our district would actually ‘block’ students from using it however. This is ‘new’ for this school year.*

*Below are all responses to my survey questions from last year's parents, with salutations and names of students removed.*

Good questions and I am glad you are, as I see it, looking out for the kids best interests by pushing forward with ideas around these programs. Being a general contractor I use computers in my office and have at least one on each job site. Because of the data we are mostly concerned with Excel is used the most by far. I can not say enough about it, the ease of using it once it's basics are understood, it's flexibility, the linking of data even from other pages, but most of all how easy it is to quickly make out a spread sheet, or a "matrix" as we refer to them, and get the info that we need to make decisions and keep the job on the tracks.

Word is used by my office a lot for letters, contracts, questions to owners etc. I think it is very important for students to learn Word because the balance of their classes require writing and Word is the gold standard. Word can be a bit tricky, used to be glitchy, but gives the best presentation by far.

Excel, I love it, and if they are going into engineering or the sciences having a facility with it definitely will make their work / learning easier.

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We run TLC Tutoring in Fairfax for 25 years now.

We use Word to layout our seasonal flyers, so the formatting options are absolutely key.

We use excel spreadsheets to keep track of student information, with just a couple of easy math functions. No lines of best fit or anything too major (although we tutor this extensively!!)

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Google is taking over the world! Smart of them to get in at the school level so they can introduce Word, Sheets, etc. . . . I am in IT Sales for AT&T and I do use Excel on occasion (but I also use for personal finance and other uses like sports registrations, etc.) - I don't proclaim to be an expert at all but do know there are some real powerful features. I do think it is something worthwhile for the kids to have a basic knowledge of.

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I do use excel AND number, word AND pages. I go back and forth between PC and Mac as well. I'm in the art business. Art publishing, pottery, merchandise display, promotions, gallery work. Yes this is important but personally I have always felt that any smart computer literate person can learn new software very easily. With that said, I do think it would be good to have the kids at minimum be exposed to these different types of software programs that are used in the "real" world

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As a software developer, I use WORD and EXCEL for my technical specifications (which require a table of contents, formatting of sections, tables of use cases, etc.) Excel is used for data analysis and I use it extensively for summing, and more complex calculations ! I do not like Google docs and wish that schools did not incorporate it in everything that the students do. In fact, I do not have a google account and never will !! I think it is very important that students learn Word and Excel since most companies do not use Google docs !!!!!!!

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I'm a contractor and I use Word and Excel for invoicing, estimating and job tracking. I think it's very important for our students to get training in these business critical tools.

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I work in the Tech industry- for Oracle- managing pricing and licensing. We use MS Office products extensively. Even though Oracle has a similar suite produced in house—it is not near as good. I think our IT group has given up on trying to get us to switch.

Most everything I do involves Word, Excel, or PowerPoint. Or some combination. Though Excel is the one app I use the most by far. I am quite adept with Excel, but even so, I probably only use 50-60% of the capabilities.

I find using (or attempting to) Google apps extremely frustrating. I do my best not to use them for much other than very rudimentary tasks.

Most folks use Office products and their use and knowledge will always be beneficial. For anyone that plans to work in business (other than at Google) knowing the Office Suite will be required.

Coincidentally, the [XXXXXXX] family has had many a dinner conversation on this subject. [XXXX]'s older sisters were continually in dismay over being "required" to use Google at school when they were so much less functional. They'd do all their work in Word then upload to Google. All my kids were exposed to Office products early on as they are the gold standard in the world of business.

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Your profession (general description) - Financial Compliance

Programs/features you use. - Word, Excel, PowerPoint

General thoughts on the importance of students developing these skills. - Very useful. I also see many job ads that require proficiency in these programs.

On another note, you sent an email I did not get the chance to respond to. It was regarding the use of tablets and phone cameras being used to take notes in class. I just finished a class at COM, where most of the students had computers open, not for taking notes, but things like watching a game of basketball or some form of social media. I found it distracting and, to be honest, quite rude. It is not the way of the future, it's the way of now, but it would be nice to see students being a lot more respectful in classes - not just to teachers, but to fellow students.

Rant over.

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Yes! I use word and excel. I'm an elementary school teacher and use word continually. However, my school district (San Rafael City Schools) is using Google docs more and more. We also have been migrating over to Google Sheets in our district although I do not like the functionality of it.

I used excel a great deal when I was in grad school and work that I continue to do for UC Davis.

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To help support your research I am an elementary school teacher who just finished writing a thesis for masters program. I used word and excel extensively to show research in tables and graphs, as well as many deeper editing tools. I could not have completed this level of schooling without a solid understanding of both word and excel.

Although my current job requirements work fine in google docs, I used many more word functions when in textile industry when doing business communications and presentations.

I too see the current shift towards google docs/sheets and less options there for these kinds of writing and displaying research. in Elementary school we teach google docs and sheets. ;)

I think the skills are still valuable, and worth teaching to high schoolers as they will need these in college for APA format etc.

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I am old compared to most parents (60)

So my views are outmoded. I do feel that the Internet and cell phones have made most students far less literate and for too obsessed with popular culture.

In the 1980's I was a computer programmer/analyst but I grew tired of sitting at a desk and looking at little green letters all day; I changed careers and became an RN.

The irony is that 3 years ago my hospital changed to computer charting and now instead of taking care of people I sit and chart all night long - I've become a data entry clerk to gather

Data to prevent the hospital from getting sued! I don't know how to use excel or spreadsheets which is sad considering the thousands of hours I spend charting instead of holding babies (I work in an NICU). I do feel that it's imperative for most students to learn these skills because it is the way of the future.

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I work in early intervention for Golden Gate Regional Center and use Word for Mac. I perform developmental evaluations and use Word for all my reports, session notes and basically any documents related to the children I work with. I don't see this changing anytime soon, and see other evaluators use MS word as well. A few times a year I teach a few professional development sessions at Mills College for graduate students in my field and I use power point and Keynote for presentations. In this case, I use google docs, if I am working with someone else on these professional development sessions. We use docs to create an outline together, to add notes, research/sources, talking points, leave comments for each other, etc...sort of like a shared notebook.....but not as any kind of final project, just as a tool and a way to work remotely on a presentation. My husband is an attorney. He uses MS word for legal documents as well as drafts, Excel for compiling data for reports, and power point for presentations. He never uses google docs.

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Yes! Very, very important to have master both these programs. I run a small business, and I use Excel spreadsheets for computations, projections, business development, Go/No-Go decisions, etc. I've spent years building and refining spreadsheets to serve my business. Of course, Word programs are important too, though the decline in grammar and general ability to write that I see in the youth is the bigger issue.

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I work for a Donor Advised Fund program on their Development (Marketing) team. We only use Word and Excel as a company. The features I use are at the VERY basic level, but it's all I've ever known. I use Word for simple docs and letters and the spreadsheet for data entry/table creation. I am not at all familiar with Google Docs, but I imagine some other working adults use this platform. Don't know if that's at all helpful. Good luck with your research!

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I would not be able to do my job without many of the sophisticated features of Excel. That applies to many people where I work, no matter where, in operations, R&D and finance. All use graphing, many use formulas and PIVOT tables, macros and VBA are less commonly used. I started using Lotus 1-2-3 worksheets in the early 80s and have used pretty much every generation of worksheets since then. I use Word but quite frankly wish it was a little less sophisticated sometimes. I do use tables of content, formatting options etc.

The Excel thing is interesting in a specific way. Excel, or better worksheets in general, is a tool that when used right enables better insight in (complex) things. It enables calculations and calculation approached that one would simply never think of without it. The thing there is that is not learning Excel that is the trick, it is the skill to translate a problem to methods and a representation that are easy to fit into or handle something like Excel. Once you start doing that, learning Excel kind of happens as a side effect. You start looking for tools and functions in Excel when you need them.

When teaching I would try to focus on that first part, how do you take a specific problem and shape it, describe it, so it fits and can be easily analysed, solved with a worksheet? That really is a skill that can pay off. It has nothing to do with specific software, it is more a way of problem solving and thinking.

I tried to teach that to [XXXXX] at some point. I quickly realized that once you are a power user of worksheets it is hard to understand how people that are not, simply can not recognize the value and use. I think it takes some relevant experience with worksheets to gain that understanding. It does not worry me in [XXXXX]'s situation. I see how he is amazingly skilled (self taught) he is with Photoshop and know that he could easily do that with other SW to whenever there is a need.

Excel also has a different effect. You absolutely do need to understand how math works but you do not need to actually do the math. The big question for education is can you teach the understanding of how math works without doing math? I believe you probably can, but it may take a different math teaching approach.

My experience is that all people that we hire out fresh of college do have more than decent computer skills, and they do need them. I don't think there are many that do not have these skills.

Mind that Google Sheets has a lot of highly sophisticated formulas as well. There is not much, for most users, that you cannot do in Google Sheets that can be done in Excel. The problem with Google Sheets is that it seems less intuitive to actually do it. The UI, when you are used to Excel, simply does not cut it.

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Absolutely! I am an EA/ Office Manager at a Solar Tech Company and we all use excel. The accounting team is using it right now. Our company grosses over 60 million annually. Also I use Word to take notes. And Typing, I type about 66 a minute, good god they need to know how to type.. Thank you for asking,

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Thanks for asking a question like this.

I use both these MS programs in my engineering-related profession.

MS Excel is a program for the ages, and in my opinion, any skills that the user acquires will make them happier all the working days of their lives.

On the other hand, MS Word (again IMO) is a fine example of bloatware that has been reworked unnecessarily for years. Although I do use it often (mostly for transferring jpg images into a third file format like AutoCAD or Solidworks), I avoid it whenever possible. Its "flexibility" has become a distinct liability, and many of the skills required for expertise don't do the user much good anywhere else. I can't blame anybody, student or otherwise, for using simpler alternatives.

So - in summary, Excel yes, Word no.

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Your profession: embedded firmware engineer, Wi-Fi and Bluetooth coexistence

Programs/features: somehow escaped having to learn Excel, although I suppose it could have helped on a few occasions. Use Word sparingly, mostly for customer docs; actually end up using Powerpoint a lot more (for presentations). Internally, WIKI and (now) Confluence for constantly evolving, hypertext documentation are far superior to standalone docs. Could never do my job well without being versed in logic analyzers, scopes and multimeters, but that's decidedly off topic. Still, exposure to such tools when covering electricity and waves (e.g., periodicity and amplitude measured and visualized on a scope) would give students a notion for how these powerful tools might be used in research and industry

General thoughts on the importance of students developing these skills: despite what I wrote above, I still think it is important for students to learn these tools and tools like them. Nowadays, Word can be used to create a professional looking resume. Not sure how written work will be composed & submitted in college, though. My assumption is it will be electronic and may not involve an application such as Word. Excel is great for making data meaningful, which is obviously powerful. Also, learning macros gives students who haven't coded an inkling of the potential of computer programming

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Game Development

Google Docs, Excel, Google Sheets, and dozens of other specialty programs for planning, coding, communicating, and collaboration. We are moving away from a dependence on Excel and Word. Other applications are either already equivalent or near enough that the collaborative nature of the Google environment outweighs any few specific features from MS products. We still support MS products for legacy reasons, but supporting old data, and the generation that is comfortable with that software (I'm 55, so am definitely in that generation and had to learn a great deal) is becoming a greater impediment each month to what we need to get done.

Is it still worth it for students to learn? Headers, Tables of Contents, Formatting Options, spread sheets, math functions are all available in non-MS products, so go ahead and teach it in Excel if that's where you are comfortable, but the students will need to then learn how to do that work in a collaborative environment as well.

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I am an educator/ tutor, and I use my iPad Pro a lot because students can write and show me their work like if it were paper. I am not at all into using any other program.

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I definitely use the entire Microsoft suite including Visio and Project but my profession kind of requires that.

- My profession is managing the development and maintenance of enterprise software, although I only contract from home now mostly because I have a compromised immune system from cancer treatments.
- I use Word and Excel regularly and definitely find the google versions of them limiting but I tend to generate Technical manuals in word and do a lot of heavy calculations in Excel so Google is tough. I sometime using Excels graphic features also. I use Visio (or something comparable when on Mac) to produce Network topology diagrams, process flows and to visually display relationships and dependencies of objects. I also use MS project for old school traditional waterfall project planning but these days most software is developed using agile methodologies which are cyclical/iterative and don't follow a traditional waterfall pattern so MS project won't really work for that.
- I personally think that it is critical that student learn word processing and spreadsheets even if it not on Microsoft products. Those two applications in particular of very much the core of most business activities and without those skills students will be at a disadvantage in the workplace.

One other thing that I use for brainstorming is called Mind Mapping. I think a lot of people could MM with great effect.

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I'm [XXXXX]'s father and first of all want to say [XXXXX] and I talk about you and your classes a lot. I have always enjoyed science and physics, so [XXXXX] and I enjoy talking about stuff and what's going on in your class. Anyway, in response to your email today, I so agree with you, on making sure student are getting experience on computer programs.

I have a bachelor of Science Degree in Construction Management from Chico State and have 2 businesses, Construction Management Consulting and General Contracting in the Commercial Construction Industry.

I graduated in 1985 and computers were just developing. The Construction Industry at that time from General Contracting, Architects, Engineers to Material Suppliers managed communications, calculations, design drawings, estimating, etc. "BY HAND"!

Its truly amazing how I do things now from those first days in Construction in the late 80's. Fax machines were amazing when they first came out. Had no idea what "email" was.....

We now have 3D drawing programs, excel spreadsheets for calculating and documenting, estimating, Scheduling programs, word programs with all kinds of templates for communications.

I have been lucky but also work my ass off to get to some high profile commercial projects in the Bay Area, I built the SF Giants Ballpark, Ritz Carlton Hotel, SF, Colma Bart Station, and also managed some highly difficult projects such as Hospitals.

The use of the internet and the all the computer programs we have now has made the industry build these large project so much faster, owners now want project that were 3 years to do, now in 2 years. I built the Giants Ballpark in 26 months and lost all my hair doing it. Haha.

We build down to the ¼ of inch and have to estimate, schedule, cost control and final cost down to the last nickel on billion dollar projects. Can't do that without the hardcore excel spreadsheets, scheduling programs, etc.

I have attached a couple programs that I use for estimates and scheduling.

You may not be able to open the scheduling program it requires Microsoft Project Program.

The Design and Construction of commercial buildings cannot be performed without advanced computer programs.

So yes, I think it's very important to keep students in getting experience in the computer programs.

Thanks for all you do at Drake and I hope we can keep [XXXXX] motivated in the Sciences...

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I am a real estate consultant (environmental, physical and seismic assessment of commercial property). I work for a 150-person company based in Minneapolis, MN

We use MS Word and MS Excel in nearly all our reports. I use it daily. We prepare our narrative assessment reports in Word and append cost tables for anticipated real estate expenditures in relatively simply Excel tables. I would consider myself proficient in both programs, but rely on an administrative staff for the advanced uses (complicated cell formulas, linking sheet fields, etc.). I think it is a very useful skill to have basic word processing (including formatting) skills (Word) and be able to enter basic formulas (+/-/x/divide) into rows and columns in Excel.

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Yes I use both of these programs sometimes at work and outside of work (for tracking dues for the Drake mountain bike team, for example). I'm a marketing director/creative director and mostly use Illustrator, InDesign and Photoshop, but I also use Excel and Word quite a bit (for budgets, agendas, press releases, strategy documents, etc.). I definitely think it's useful for the students to learn these programs, and wish they were asked to more often - they are both powerful tools. Appreciate you asking, and thinking carefully about what the students need!

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I use every day. General Contractor. Excel & Word . Very important in my industry and I would think most industries. I actually can't stand google docs.

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Yes!!! I use these programs all day, every day and it is the norm in most professions. You are on to something here!

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Hi. I use excel. I'm in family law and do a lot of financial analysis that needs to be presented in an organized fashion. Very helpful to know. But, I also see that if/when they are in need of a new skill this generation knows how to drill down on learning (through google or whatever).

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I use word but just to produce contracts and invoices . I am a postpartum doula .  
Yes I do think these skills are important for the kids to know before they go off to college .

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Your profession (general description) Retired (Concert Production, BGP)  
Programs/features you use. Outlook, Firefox, Banktivity: Word & Excell usually to read only  
General thoughts on the importance of students developing these skills. Only as it suits their direction in life. [XXXXX]'s path is taking him toward the sciences.

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I use both programs extensively. As a Director of Environmental Safety with a strong background in occupational and environmental toxicology we use Excel to create pivot tables for compiling presentations for our Board and our Employees at the Bridge ,Bus and Ferry. Data collection and analysis is essential for anybody going into science and business fields.  
I have been puzzled by the lack of training I see coming out of Drake on the use of key Microsoft programs like Word Excel and Powerpoint. [XXXXX] I believe has not received any mandate or training to use these tools.

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I use computers (a lot) as part of my job at Pixar and I have a PhD in computer science and engineering. I think your students' experience reflects current trends about what is relevant -- not just to students, but also to professionals. People want and need to share documents easily in the cloud. That is more important than specific feature sets. The Google apps allow that to happen which is why they are becoming ubiquitous.  
Word and Excel are very powerful, but difficult to use because they have decades of features piled up on top of each other making them overly complex for most people (accountants withstanding). Most people don't value the deep feature sets of those tools. Personally, I prefer to use Numbers/Pages (Apple) or Google Suite apps just because they are simpler.  
So I don't think it's important for students to learn Excel and Word. I think it's more valuable for them to learn Google Suite because this (sharing/collaborating over the cloud) is increasingly how people work.

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Software developer  
Word and Excel almost daily  
Very important skills to have.

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As a preschool teacher I do not use any; however [XXXXX] learned to use a number of programs with the Microsoft Academy. I think he could tell you what he thinks of their value. Crucial for their business development presentation.

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I'm a Product Mgr at Calypso Tech, Financial Markets Software.  
Excel is a must know. Gotta know it. Word is very relevant and all assume you know it day one.  
Google docs sucks.

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Yes, my wife and I use computers both on the job and at home. In my experience, competence with Word and Excel is not just valuable but critical. Otherwise, how do you analyze, compute and present complicated data in an efficient, accurate fashion. How do you prepare a professional marketing plan or proposal with timelines, budgets and flow charts? List goes on.  
Google docs is short hand, back of the envelope. Useful, good to know but basic and limited.  
I am in finance. My wife is in hospitality/event marketing.

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[XXXXX]'s mom here. I used Word and Excel all the time and I think it's really important for kids to know how to use them. I'm an IT consultant (build and support networks, email systems, ERP, etc.) so I may be biased. My clients would never be able to survive with just google docs (which sucks in my opinion). They need the more advanced features in the office suite.  
Thanks for doing this survey. I'm interested in the results.

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-Account Executive for a furniture company. I use both at work and it is a very important that the kids learn how to use it. All jobs these days use them.  
I use Excel for reports, spec sheets and to create custom price lists for customers.  
I am not that familiar w Excel, but my co-workers use pivot tables frequently.

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I use excel and word extensively. I'm a CPA. I have taught [XXXXX] the basics of excel. The formulas are magic.

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I am pediatric nurse practitioner in child neurology. At work I use an electronic medical records system but I do have occasion to use MS Word. In addition, I do some consulting as well and in the capacity I use a Mac but I regularly use Word for Mac to write child assessment reports.

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I think it is very important for the kids to be highly proficient in MS Word and MS Excel. I am personally very troubled by the trend of schools to do most homework online and to require less formal writing. Regardless of what profession the student pursues, they need to be able to communicate in a professional manner and to do so, be able to use the full range of features available on a Word program. Google docs is not sufficient once kids get into to the real world.

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Yes I use MS Word and Excel for work. I use Excel frequently. I am a project manager in the construction industry, and I use it to create, track and update budgets. I use it for my billing and project accounting too. Although I have used Excel for years now, I only use a fraction of its functionality. I like writing formulas to do simple analytics i.e. percent complete vs. percent billed, burn rates, year-to-date totals, balance to finish, retentions etc. Sometime I use linked spreadsheets to track multiple budgets in a master budget and have updates flow to it.  
From time to time I use it to graphically represent budgets and schedules in a single document. If you think of Excel as an ocean, you can see me playing in the shore break. It is a powerful and versatile program; it can do so many things.



I use Word less frequently, as most of the writing I do is in emails, unless some piece of substance is required. In that case, I write in Word and attach it. I find it most useful when writing and reviewing contracts where multiple parties need to add, delete and make changes. It keeps track of all of the input and authors.

Both are programs that will stay in the workplace for the long term. I think some level of proficiency in Excel is essential to performance of any job these days.

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\*Special Ed teacher

\*Google Docs

\*Would love to see students in general ed learn all the computer programs possible!

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I am an accountant and bookkeeper using Excel up to Pivot Tables for one my clients. I think it's really important, I have encountered of a number of business owners of do not really know how to use it. However with adults I think its partly because they have forgotten a lot math. For example to work out percentage increase they divide into wrong number.

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I am a marine biologist with the USEPA Region 9, and my work is primarily labwork and fieldwork. I agree with you! Most of our newer hires (millennials) do have great command of Microsoft Word and Excel, & next generations will need that as well.

I agree that Excel is a great program for graphing functions – I use it for regressions, simple medians & means, & control charting. We also use Excel when we are looking at trends in data when auditing laboratories. We use more complex programs (Access – based) for databases and statistical analysis programs. We also use Microsoft Word for writing reports & letters.

Thank you for helping prepare our next generation for STEM careers.

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I think you are raising a good point here. I direct a non-profit avian research and conservation organization, and I still use both Word and Excel every day and have resisted switching to the Google program for exactly the reasons you describe. I definitely still expect new employees to be proficient in Word and Excel.

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-Winemaker -Excel and Word and Powerpoint. Use them every day.

-Yes they absolutely need these skills. And before college. Thanks for asking.

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Yes! Both my husband and I use Word and Excel as part of our professional and personal life almost on a daily basis, and we have been for at least 25 years. We have recently worked with both our kids on both of these programs during this school year, so I think they are both familiar with the programs a little. Very much worth while to know these programs, in my opinion.

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Interesting. I'd love to hear your results. I've noticed the same thing and wondered if it's unique to our districts (it being the exclusive use of google.docs) or if it's the case in most areas. I'm the librarian at Hidden Valley Elementary school. In that capacity I use specialized computer programs. All district shared documents however are put on a google drive and are google docs. When I need to create documents I personally use word and excel.

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Excel, Word and Acrobat are the programs I use throughout my day. My background is in architecture and I have a firm that designs exhibits for museums.

We use excel to create cost proposals and create cost estimates (with embedded formulas), we use word for writing research documents, developing written content and generating simple content management systems for tracking museum artifacts and objects. We use InDesign for creating reports, interpretive graphics and pdfs formatted Client presentation. We also use acrobat to review and comment on PDFs created by our designers CAD, Cinema 4D and InDesign files. Though I mostly use MS

and Adobe software, I wish the MS software was not "bloatware" and more streamlined and responsive like Google Docs.

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I am self employed as an interior designer specializing in kitchens and baths. I also own with my husband, Mason Plumbing, Inc. My husband is a plumbing contractor. He does not use Word or Excel. We do however have staff who do use both programs. I used to use both programs along with many others when I was formerly a graphic artist. When I shifted gears to interior architecture and design, my computer work became much more involved with Adobe and Autodesk products among other drafting and 3D modeling programs.

Regarding the importance of students developing the specific skills of Word and Excel, I don't think they are as relevant as they were several years ago, and are rapidly becoming less relevant. Technology is changing so quickly, and the machines that we use to run software are being replaced so frequently, that I find I am able to get by just using the pre-loaded simpler products on my Mac when I need word processing and spreadsheets. I just don't have the time anymore to keep reloading and re-registering all the software every time I have to replace a machine. What I do think is important is that students learn generally the ability to navigate software and understand that from one product to another, there are many similarities like Fonts, image placement, cell functions, etc. that they should know. Also, so many products are now in the cloud so it is important for students to know how to find and use information and technology from the cloud. I actually really appreciate Google docs, sheets, etc. because it allows me to share so much more information with my employees instantly. I also really appreciate my kids being able to turn in their work instantly instead of losing it between completing it and getting it to the teacher physically. Of course that is a loss on the side of organization and responsibility, but that's a rabbit hole for another day to explore.

Program features I use generally are just basic formatting for letter writing and simple spreadsheets for tracking PO's and the like. Anything heavier and it's passed on to my bookkeeper and accountant who are professionally trained in deeper use of the programs they need. I actually use Adobe products much more for my marketing materials for each business too. Again, I am specifically trained to use those. General thoughts are not to worry too much about the kids learning Word and Excel specifically because they will be learning so much more technology but maybe at a wider but less deep level until they figure out what profession they want to go into. Then they will learn on the job like the rest of us did!

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I am a serial startup entrepreneur so I get to see many of the tech. trends very early. If I were to offer my opinion it would be to focus on Google Docs. Right now GDocs is becoming increasingly popular in business, primarily because 1) it is much easier to store/share files, 2) the features have gotten close enough that they are good enough and 3) it is what all the kids are using. Also, GDocs does have the features you outlined including tables, ToC, Headers, Footers, Footnotes, etc, Furthermore. there are a lot of additional plugins. You can see some [here](#). Right now, I don't see kids using these features because 1) they do not come from the MS Office world and 2) because most HS teachers don't ask for formatting, so they are not asked to learn them.

At the same time, Microsoft (MS) has made a lot of strides with their office online programs which allow real time collaboration and markup. Unfortunately, MS does not have a great/popular file sharing system (like box and dropbox). Google has the benefits of file storage (GDrive) and GDocs combined. So, I would guess a few things

1. Both MS Office and GDoc will be around for the foreseeable future, with GDoc growing much faster
2. Academia will continue to move to Google, so learning the advanced features in Google will be more useful to kids in the short-term
3. Both will be used interchangeably in business, with GDocs growing faster

Bottom line, I would have them learn to use the advanced functions in GDocs because it will teach them the basics and be more useful in college. Using all the major features in GDoc is easily transferred to Word, should they need to use it.

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I'm a math teacher and use word to produce tests, create evaluations and write letters of recommendations. I'm pretty much of a Luddite when it comes to technology so I use what I know. I hadn't realized that google docs were limited.

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In response, I work as a scientific administrator and I do use Word and Excel pivot tables every single day at work. My husband works in a pharmaceutical company and he uses Word every day, and Excel often. Our home computers have these programs on them as well.

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Yes we use word and excel frequently on the job on a daily basis. We are a publishing company that produces print and digital content and events.

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I'm a lawyer and we use both excel and word extensively in my office. For student who will end up in the business world I would think an ability to use both programs would be important.

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Yes by all means kids should work with these programs though I would also suggest that they need to do some of their work the old fashioned way, sans computers. I personally do not like google docs at all for the reasons you listed. I am a marine biologist and use word every day, and excel regularly

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Great questions: Product Developer, Levi's Men's Denim Bottoms. Excel all day every day, Word, Access, Sharepoint, PLM, local mainframes, SAP, PowerPoint, Outlook all day every day. In Excel, most important: pivots, vlookups, formulas, data validation, conditional formatting, hot-keys. General thoughts on the importance of students developing these skills.

Absolutely mandatory for success in the business world, even if the tasks will not be needed every day, even if the work is for non-profits, or at an animal shelter, or in a cafe. For creating opportunities in today's world, it is mandatory to possess these basic computer skills.