

COMP 10064

Assignment 5

Product Evaluation Technical Report

You will create a Product Evaluation Technical Report that compares two current and competing software applications and makes a recommendation for adoption based on the feature comparison only. **Do not consider the cost of the product in your recommendation decision.** The true cost is complex and must consider support, implementation, training and other factors. Financial considerations are out of scope for this report.

Audience: (technical) IT manager

Assignment Requirements

Here's the scenario: Your boss (the CIO), has asked you to investigate 2 software applications, compare their features only, and **make a clear recommendation for adoption**, based on features (not cost). One application is Open Source and the other is a commercial product.

Cost issues: comparing the cost of adoption is more complex than comparing the licensing cost of each product. Implementation costs include licensing, support, and conversion. This issue is beyond the scope of this report. The CIO has contacted the Finance Department to compare costs.

You will choose 2 software applications of the same category listed below, and compare their functionality. The applications are suitable for a business setting. You will write a Product Evaluation Technical Report, including executive summary, and your recommendation for adoption. You can choose from the Microsoft Office, Open Office, or LibreOffice applications. You can also compare one of these to the appropriate Apple products, but be careful not to make it a Windows vs. Apple OS comparison as well.

Here are some examples of products you may choose to compare:

- MS Word compared to either Open Office Writer or LibreOffice Writer
- MS Excel compared to either Open Office Calc or LibreOffice Calc
- MS PowerPoint compared to either Open Office Presentation or LibreOffice Impress
- MS Access compared to either Open Office Base or LibreOffice Base
- Adobe Photoshop compared to Gimp
- MS Outlook compared to Thunderbird
- comparisons approved by your professor

You may NOT compare:

- Web browsers
- Chat, file sharing software, games, mobile apps
- Operating Systems (MS Windows vs Linux)
- applications that are too small for comparison (Paint, Notepad)

Feature Comparisons

This report describes the results of evaluating software products by comparing 3 – 5 non-trivial features of the two products. That is, you will need to download and install the products, and test features, then compare the individual features in your report. For instance, if you compare the WordArt feature in Word with its comparable feature in Writer (if it exists), you would list the similarities and differences of the feature, and state which one is better and why, using an objective comparison. Do this for each of 3 – 5 features.

This report should NOT be a list of pros and cons for each software application. It must be a comparison of 3 – 5 individual features, comparing the same features in each application.

You must download and install the Open Source product as well as the commercial product. You can use <http://apps.mohawkcollege.ca> to access the Microsoft products on your home computer if you wish.

Report Requirements

- 1,200- 1,500 words (with images, the report should be approximately 8 - 10 pages)
- Title page, containing the title, your name, student number
- Format your document such that headings are obvious (bold, larger font)
- Use 1" margins, and page numbers on the bottom of each page
- **The source of each image must be cited in the image caption.** If you took a screen capture, indicate your name as the source. If you did not create the image, indicate the source as the URL for the original image.
 - Image source: created by John Doe
 - Image source: <http://www.mohawkcollege.ca>
- Remember that the audience is an IT Manager and understands technical terminology and what these software applications do. Write as if you were explaining it to a peer.
- Include the following sections, in this order:
 - Introduction
 - Introduce the two products that will be compared including the category of software and brief explanation of the productivity tasks that can be accomplished with the software.
 - Remember that the audience is an IT Manager and understands what these software applications do. Do not explain it as if it were written for a non-technical user.

- Executive Summary
 - Briefly summarize your discussion, and recommendation. Do not re-state your conclusion. This section should stand on its own, and can be removed from the full report, to give to an "executive". Include a summary of the discussion and recommendation. This should be 1 page or less and you should write it after you've written the rest of the report.
- Discussion
 - Compare the functionality of the two products. Since these products may be robust and complex, focus on 3 - 5 different tasks and compare the method used to perform these tasks in each product. Find the strengths of each application and compare those features. Be sure to include visuals (Figures) showing screen captures of each product and its method for performing the task. Label parts of the visuals where appropriate for the discussion. This is not a step-by-step tutorial. This should be an explanation of how each task is accomplished, in general, contrasting the different methods for each application. Do NOT compare the number of clicks to access a feature. This should be a comparison of features, not usability. A good example of comparing features is that tables in Word can be inserted using the grid feature, but this feature does not exist at all in Writer. Another example is that Calc requires that a style is defined before it can be applied as conditional formatting, but Excel can use conditional formatting without defining the style first. Use web searches to find these differences, then choose some differences that might be significant enough to make an adoption decision, and describe these differences using examples and screen captures.
 - This should be the bulk of your report, approximately 800 words
- Conclusion
 - Summarize your findings. Briefly, what were the pros and cons of each application with respect to each other. Compare them. Do not just list the features of each application.
 - Recommend one product and state your reasons why you recommend this one, taking into consideration only functionality and ease of use. Do not consider cost, or platform
- References
 - List all References used in the document
 - **Use in-text citations for all material that is not your original work, has been paraphrased from other material, facts (data)**

Plagiarism and Citation

You must cite all sources used for this report using APA or another standard citation methodology. If the report contains copy and pasted text or images from another source (Web page, document), the report must contain in-text citations that clearly identify the original author of the work. If there is copy/pasted content in the report that does not have a

corresponding in-text citation and reference listed in the References section, the document may be considered plagiarized and will receive a grade of 0 and possible consequences as outlined in Mohawk's Academic Honesty policy. If you have any questions about this, please discuss this with your Professor.

It is not sufficient to include a References section without in-text citations. A report that contains a References section without in-text citations, or multiple instances of incorrectly cited or uncited material will be graded as 0.

Technical Report Presentation

You will present your report findings to the class in a 3 minute presentation. You are encouraged to use a PowerPoint presentation. Displaying your report to the audience is distracting and leaves the impression that the presentation is unprepared.

Submitting the Assignment

Ensure that your assignment is a single Word document (.doc or .docx). Please submit your Word doc or docx file via the Assignments menu in MyCanvas.