

Google Workspace vs Microsoft 365: An MSSP's Take for Canadian SMBs

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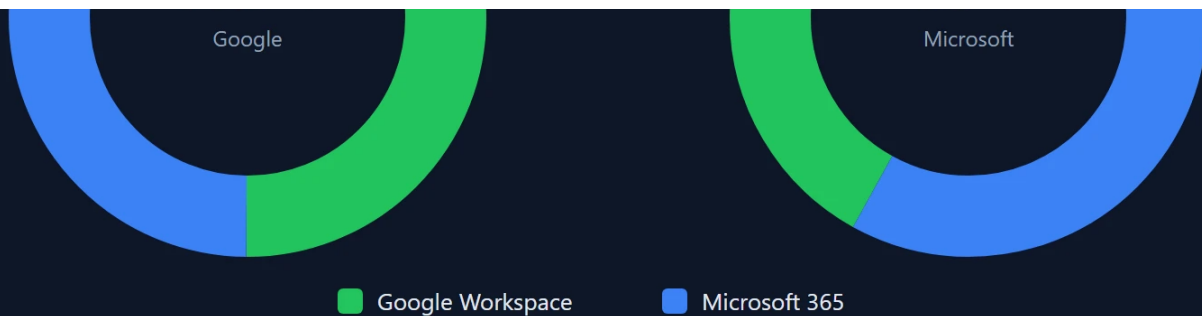
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Tags: Google workspace, managed it,
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Source: 6sense, MedhaCloud, 2026 | fusioncomputing.ca

Written by Mike Pearlstein, CISSP, CEO of Fusion Computing Limited. Helping Canadian businesses build and manage secure IT infrastructure since 2012 across Toronto, Hamilton, and Metro Vancouver.

Most Google Workspace vs Microsoft 365 comparisons stop at feature checklists. The decision that matters for a Canadian SMB is narrower: which suite handles data residency, identity, and the security stack inside

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Google Workspace cannot Google Workspace leads but total

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domains worldwide (about 60% per 6sense, mostly small and education accounts), but Microsoft passed 450 million paid commercial seats in January 2026 and dominates enterprise.

For a 10-to-150-seat Canadian business with PHIPA, Law 25, or insurance pressure, Microsoft 365 Business Premium is the cleaner buy. The full breakdown is below.

By the numbers

QUICK SELF-CHECK

Is your tenant ready for Microsoft 365 Copilot?

Run a 2-minute readiness scan across licensing, data hygiene, identity and governance, and see what to fix before you roll Copilot out.

Run the Copilot readiness scan →

or book a free 30-min call →

Free · no email until you see your score, or talk to a senior engineer.

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Google Workspace data-region options: United States, European Union, or No preference. Canada is not selectable. [Google Workspace Admin](#)

2

Canadian Azure regions backing Microsoft 365 Advanced Data Residency: Canada Central (Toronto) and Canada East (Québec City). [Microsoft Learn 2026](#)

CA\$4,920

Annual savings at 50 seats running Microsoft 365 Business Premium vs Workspace Business Plus plus third-party EDR and MDM to reach security parity. *Fusion Computing 2026*

Market share depends on the lens

Share of domains, Applications Suite category (includes education and micro-business)

Google Workspace

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"After roughly 200 migrations between the two platforms, the deciding factor is almost never feature checklists. It is the residency question. Canadian firms with PHIPA, Law 25, or cyber-insurance pressure overwhelmingly land on Microsoft 365, because Purview eDiscovery, Defender for Office 365 logs, and Canadian-resident data show up as one tenant in the audit pack. Google Workspace can be made compliant, but the missing Canadian data region keeps surfacing as a recurring audit question."

Mike Pearlstein, CISSP, Co-founder, Fusion Computing

Key Takeaways

- Microsoft 365 stores customer data at rest in Canadian Azure regions (Toronto and Québec City). Google Workspace data region options are US, EU, or No preference. Canada is not selectable as of Q1 2026.
- Microsoft 365 Business Premium bundles Defender for Office 365, Intune, Entra ID Conditional Access, and Purview DLP under one SKU. Workspace expects buyers to assemble equivalents from third parties.
- Gemini for Workspace is included with Business Standard. Microsoft 365 Copilot is a paid add-on but reaches deeper

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Google Workspace vs Microsoft 365: snapshot at a glance

Google Workspace and Microsoft 365 ship the same core: business email, cloud storage, documents, video, and identity. They diverge on security depth, where data lives, and AI pricing, and that divergence, not the shared feature list, is what decides the right suite for a Canadian SMB. *Source: Fusion Computing Google Workspace vs Microsoft 365 analysis, 2026.*

Both suites ship the same core of business email, cloud storage, documents, video, and identity. They diverge on security depth, data location, and AI pricing. The snapshot below frames the rest of this guide.

Criterion	Google Workspace	Microsoft 365
Pricing tiers	Starter, Standard, Plus, Enterprise	Business Basic, Standard, Premium, E3, E5
Security stack	Workspace security center; Vault on Enterprise	Defender, Intune, Entra ID, Purview (in Premium)
Compliance and residency	US, EU, or No preference (Canada not selectable)	Customer data at rest in Canadian Azure regions
AI on every seat	Gemini included from Business Standard up	Copilot is a paid add-on with deeper cross-app reach

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What Google Workspace is good at

Google Workspace is strongest for browser-first teams that value real-time collaboration and bundled AI. Its real-time co-editing in Docs, Sheets, and Slides still beats Microsoft 365 web co-authoring on smoothness, Gmail spam filtering is among the strongest defaults, and Gemini for Workspace is included from Business Standard up at no add-on cost. *Source: Fusion Computing Google Workspace vs Microsoft 365 analysis, 2026.*

Google Workspace is browser-first by design. Real-time co-editing in Docs, Sheets, and Slides still beats Microsoft 365 web co-authoring on smoothness, and Gmail's spam filtering remains one of the strongest defaults in the market.

Gemini for Workspace is included with Business Standard and above, putting generative AI on every seat at no add-on cost, which helps marketing and creative teams. Pooled Drive storage (5 TB across the tenant on Business Plus) suits creative shops better than per-user OneDrive caps.

Workspace fits cloud-native teams under 10 seats, creative shops where multi-cursor editing is the daily workflow, and businesses without PHIPA, Law 25, or PIPEDA residency obligations.

What Microsoft 365 is good at

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It fits hybrid Windows and Mac estates, regulated industries (finance, healthcare, legal), and any business whose insurer asks for Canadian-resident data plus enforced MFA. For Copilot economics, see [Microsoft 365 Copilot pricing in Canada for 2026](#).

Working through this for your business?

Mike Pearlstein, CISSP, and the Fusion Computing team support Canadian SMBs with migrating between Google Workspace and Microsoft 365 or comparing total cost of ownership. Free 30-minute consult, we will tell you what we would do.

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Security and compliance: side-by-side (Microsoft Purview vs Google Workspace security center)

Microsoft 365 Business Premium ships its security stack (Defender for Office 365, Intune, Conditional Access, Purview DLP) inside the base SKU; Google Workspace

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Our matching Purview's depth typically requires vault on Enterprise tiers

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Canadian compliance turns on four laws: PIPEDA federally, PHIPA for Ontario health information, British Columbia's PIPA, and Quebec Law 25 for any business holding Quebec residents' personal information. Each cares about where data sits, who can access it, and how breaches are disclosed.

FIELD NOTE FROM MIKE

A first-person field observation from the cyber-insurance renewals we support: applications now ask where customer data sits at rest, not just whether MFA is enforced. A Microsoft 365 tenant provisioned with Canada as its home geography answers that in one line. Workspace tenants can still pass, but in our practice that answer takes an explanation memo instead of a checkbox, and renewals slow down accordingly.

If your insurer asks the residency question, see [our cybersecurity services overview](#) for the documentation pattern Fusion Computing builds for clients. Not sure where your stack stands today? [Take the free IT business assessment](#) → and get a scored read on your security and compliance posture.

AI-readiness: Copilot vs Gemini for Workspace

Gemini for Workspace lands at a lower sticker price because it is bundled with Business Standard and above. For broad summarization, drafting in Gmail, and quick analysis in Sheets, Gemini is enough on day one and there

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Fusion Computing licenses Copilot for 5 to 10 power users first, measures

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FIELD NOTE FROM MIKE

In our practice the Copilot-versus-Gemini call is made by workload, not by brand loyalty. We tracked hours saved across the 5-to-10-seat Copilot pilots we run before any wider rollout: finance and operations teams justify the add-on fastest because the wins land in Excel and Outlook, while marketing teams are often just as happy on bundled Gemini. Pilot first, license second.

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Cost comparison at 50 users

The fair comparison is security-included: Microsoft 365 Business Premium against Google Workspace Business Plus plus baseline EDR (CrowdStrike Falcon Go) and MDM (Jamf Now Plus) to reach parity. CAD list pricing, annual commitment, taxes extra. Pricing references: [Microsoft 365 plan compare](#) and [Google Workspace pricing](#).

Line item	M365 Business Premium	GWS Plus + EDR + MDM
Per user, per month	CA\$29.80	~CA\$38.00

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plus MDM as table stakes

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Want this table rebuilt at your real seat count? **Book a consult** → and a CISSP-led team at a Microsoft Solutions Partner will price both stacks against your renewal dates.

FUSION COMPUTING SERVICES RELATED TO THIS TOPIC

Microsoft 365 Copilot →

Managed IT Services →

AI Services →

Not sure which fits? [Tell us about your situation](#) and we will point you to the right next step.

When does Google Workspace win for a Canadian SMB?

Workspace is the right call when the business is under 10 seats, fully cloud-native, and holds no PHIPA, Law 25, or PIPEDA-graded data. It also wins when real-time multi-cursor co-editing is the daily workflow, when Gemini-

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When does Microsoft 365 win?

Microsoft 365 wins for teams above 20 seats, anyone touching PHIPA or Law 25 data, regulated finance and legal practices, hybrid Windows estates, and businesses already on Azure. It also wins anywhere a cyber-insurance application asks for Defender, Intune, MFA, and Canadian-resident data on one SKU.

Switching cost matters too. A business with years of SharePoint history, Teams channels, and Entra ID groups rarely benefits from a Workspace cutover, even at a lower per-seat price. See [how we harden Microsoft Teams security for Canadian businesses](#).

Editorial pick: what FC recommends

For Canadian SMBs in 2026, Microsoft 365 Business Premium is the stronger choice above roughly 20 seats or when handling PHIPA, Quebec Law 25, or PIPEDA-graded data; Google Workspace wins under about 10 seats when fully cloud-native with no regulated data. Microsoft 365 ties DLP, retention, and eDiscovery to one Purview policy plane, an advantage that compounds as headcount and compliance exposure rise.

Source: Fusion Computing analysis across 200+ Canadian SMB migrations, 2026.

The recommendation below is a Fusion Computing benchmark, not vendor marketing: an FC internal benchmark from Q2 2026. We benchmarked

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way to deliver Defender, Intune, Conditional Access, MFA, and Canadian-resident data on one SKU.

I run Workspace where it fits, but for a 10-to-150-seat business with any compliance footprint, Business Premium wins on stack coherence and on the artifacts an auditor or insurer asks for. *Mike Pearlstein, CISSP, CEO of Fusion Computing.*

Frequently asked questions

Is Google Workspace cheaper than Microsoft 365?

At entry tier, yes. Workspace Business Starter runs roughly 10% cheaper per seat than Microsoft 365 Business Basic. Once security parity is required (Business Premium versus Workspace Plus plus EDR and MDM), Microsoft 365 is the cheaper bundle, by about CA\$4,920 a year at 50 seats on Canadian list pricing.

Does Google Workspace store data in Canada?

No. Workspace data regions are US, EU, or No preference as of Q1 2026. Microsoft 365 stores customer data at rest in Canadian Azure regions (Toronto and Québec City) for tenants provisioned with Canada as the home geography.

Which platform handles PHIPA, British Columbia PIPA, and Quebec Law 25 better?

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PowerPoint, but it is a paid add-on. Gemini is included with Workspace

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How long does a Workspace-to-Microsoft 365 migration take?

A 25-seat tenant takes 7 to 10 business days end to end. A 100-seat tenant runs 3 to 4 weeks. The work covers discovery, identity cutover, mailbox and file migration, and endpoint reconfiguration. Configuring Entra ID Conditional Access, Intune, and Defender during migration collapses three projects into one.

What is the Google Workspace vs Microsoft 365 market share split?

It depends on how you measure. By total domains, Google Workspace leads at about 59.9% of the Applications Suite category and Microsoft 365 sits near 12.3% (6sense, 2026), driven by small-business and education accounts. By paid enterprise seats, Microsoft 365 dominates with more than 450 million commercial paid seats globally as of January 2026 (Microsoft FY26 Q2). For a Canadian SMB buying decision, enterprise seats are the more honest benchmark.

Related Resources

- [Microsoft 365 Copilot service hub](#)
- [how we harden Microsoft Teams security for Canadian businesses](#)
- [Managed IT Services for Canadian businesses](#)
- [our cybersecurity services overview](#)
- [Microsoft 365 Copilot pricing in Canada for 2026](#)

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