



QuickBooks – Is It Time to Switch to Online?

If you have become frustrated with the desktop version of QuickBooks or are just starting out and wondering if the online version may be better for your start-up and are considering taking the plunge to the cloud, here are some points to consider in your decision process.

Just as with the desktop/server version, there are multiple editions of the online offering. For the cloud version, Intuit offers Simple Start, Essentials and Plus versions. There are also an Enterprise Solution + Hosting and Accountant versions. For the traditional software, Intuit has Pro, Mac and Premier versions for small business, and an Enterprise version for larger businesses. An Accountant version is also an option.

For traditional QuickBooks, your data as well as the application itself typically reside on your desktop or server, depending upon your configuration. You are responsible for running backups and securing access. With QuickBooks Online, your data and the application are stored in the cloud, with Intuit responsible for providing security, redundancy and backup.



Access to your data with the online version is improved – this is one of the major advantages. As the app and your data are online, you can access it from anywhere and at anytime and by multiple users as long as you subscribe to Essentials or Plus.

Another advantage for using QuickBooks Online is how your accountant accesses your data come tax time. With the traditional form, you usually need to take an accountants copy and either send the file using a file sharing tool, save it to a thumb drive, or allow your accountant remote access, all of which can be cumbersome. QuickBooks Online allows up to 2 accountants to join your company; they can run reports and post transactions as long as you set them up with the requisite privileges to do so.

The third and possibly biggest advantage of using QuickBooks Online is the software is automatically updated when Intuit modifies the program. Intuit typically updates the desktop/server version software once a year; you need to purchase a new version of the program if you want the updates. While most small businesses do not update their software annually, the operating system you use and the availability of desired new features may force an update sooner rather than later.

So about now you are saying, okay, all this sounds good, what does it cost? The online versions are subscription based and are available for a monthly fee*. The chart shows the various fee structures for the Online versions.

QuickBooks Online Simple Start	QuickBooks Online Essentials	QuickBooks Online Plus	QuickBooks Online Enterprise Solutions + Hosting	QuickBooks Online Accountant
\$12.95/month	\$26.95/month	\$39.95/month	\$999.95 plus \$54.99/user per month	Free

Compare these prices with the traditional software pricing*:

QuickBooks For Mac 2014	QuickBooks Pro 2014	QuickBooks Premier 2014	QuickBooks Enterprise 14.0	QuickBooks Accountant 2014
\$249.95	\$249.95	399.95	\$999.95	\$379.95 (regularly \$499.95)

*Pricing from Intuit's official website: <http://quickbooks.intuit.com/products/>

Intuit offers a product comparison tool depending upon what features you need to help guide you in the appropriate product selection.

There are features that are available to the desktop version that are not in the online one, including Statement Writer, more freedom to customize forms and reports, QuickBooks Point of Sale (POS) integration and more robust dashboard screens. On the flip side, the Online version has some enhanced features not available to the standard desktop version, among them automation of Invoice/sales receipt, email reporting and bank transaction downloads. The activity log is much more granular in its tracking capability for the online version as well as includes class *and* location tracking. Intuit also claims a better user experience with a simpler, more intuitive menu that makes navigation easier.

Which is best for you and your business? It depends on what feature/functionality you need, your budget, your practices and discipline in backing up and securing your technology environment, and your need for flexibility and access. If you need help making a choice, consult with us or your accounting professional.



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