

DIGITAL DOLLARS

Can you put a price on 'freemium' apps?

Evernote and iCloud have limits that can be worked around with alternative, and still free, apps

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Many of the free apps you're setting up on new gadgets will soon ask for your money.

That's the basic bargain of so-called freemium pricing: The money a minority of avid users pay for extra features underwrites a limited, free version of the service for everybody else.

Getting a useful service without paying is great, but not if thumb wrestling with its free tier's limits becomes a burden. Here's how to consider the freemium propositions of two popular services:

► **Evernote:** The obvious hangup with this note-taking app's free offering is a two-device limit. The \$34.99/year Plus plan abolishes that and ups your monthly data-transfer quota to 1 GB, but you can get free multi-device note-taking with Microsoft's OneNote or Google Keep. Apple's Notes is an option too - but you'd better be married to Apple's hardware to rely on it.

If you've spent years in Evernote, bringing over those notes may constrain your choice.

I, however, still use the even-pricier Evernote Premium. That \$69.99/year version's ability to scan somebody's business card and fill in blanks from their LinkedIn profile has yet to be matched by OneNote, even though Microsoft now owns LinkedIn.

► **iCloud:** Apple's cloud-storage service is easy to start using and easy to outgrow - iPhone or iPad backups can fill up 5 GB quickly. Extra storage costs less than before, starting at 50 GB for \$11.88 a year, but you can also give iCloud a break

by letting another service back-up photos. Google Photos offers unlimited storage of slightly-compressed images and impressively smart automatic categorization of them, while Yahoo's Flickr gives one terabyte of free, uncompressed storage. Both work on Android devices too; USA TODAY's Jefferson Graham found Google the best photo-backup option last year. *(Disclosure: I write for Yahoo Finance but have no say in Flickr.)*



EVERNOTE.

Manage your professional and personal life with a free "cloud"-based app like Evernote.

For moving files between computers, Microsoft's OneDrive (5 GB free) and Google Drive (15 GB free) can both relieve iCloud while also allowing Web access to your documents; Dropbox's 2 GB of free storage is feeble in comparison.

Still bothered by paying for a once-free app? If you haven't already, treat this as an invitation to chip away at telecom costs by buying a cable modem instead of renting it, then replacing a rented cable box on a secondary TV with an antenna or streaming-media player.

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