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## CloudOn “sold out” of free iPad app for editing Microsoft Office docs

BY DAVID NEEDLE January 4 2012, 3:45 pm

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A Silicon Valley startup apparently got more than it bargained for when it quietly released a free version of an iPad app designed to let users access and create Microsoft Office

documents on Apple’s popular tablet device.

CloudOn might be better tagged with the name “CloudOff” after the company was forced to stop offering its free cloud service after only a day. The free CloudOn service works in conjunction with DropBox to let iPad users, work with and create Microsoft Word, Excel and Powerpoint documents. But a message on the Silicon Valley startup’s website says the service is currently “sold out.”

In a blog post titled [Day One at CloudOn](#) the company admits to being surprised by the “overwhelming” response to its offer.

“Unfortunately, we did not anticipate the thousands of people that would gravitate to the service in a matter of hours. Although we had planned to support a large number of users, the interest generated was beyond our expectations, and we have had a few teething issues with our platform (some of which we have already partially resolved). We have also made additional resources available to ensure that we can continue to support our current users.”

CloudOn has been taken down from the iPad AppStore Also and will reappear when “when we are confident we can support more users,” the blog post said.

Going forward it appears CloudOn plans to charge for at least parts of the service when it reappears.

“... we have decided to initially make the app available for free, even though we bear the cost for it,” the blog said. “We believe we will receive valuable feedback that will in turn help us improve our service and define a pricing model that is win-win for all – offering parts of the application for free, while parts will be offered as a paid service.”

Rick Singer, CEO of [GreatApps.com](http://GreatApps.com), said most app developers would love to have the problem CloudOn has of too much interest because, generally speaking, discoverability is a huge issue for mobile app vendors.

"As a marketer, I would love to have the problem they're having," said Singer. "We just passed the one million app mark across mobile platforms and it's very rare for a company to have to take its app down."

Singer added that one thing CloudOn should take into consideration when it relaunches is that "about one in four, 26%, of people who download an app never use it again even when it's free with a premium upgrade."

He thinks there will be minimal impact from the glitch if CloudOn charges a reasonable price and the service works as promised.

"The ability to create and work with Microsoft documents on the iPad is something people want, it's something I want," said Singer. He suggests a \$2.99 or \$3.99 price would draw plenty of interest, but \$10 would limit its appeal.

Microsoft is rumored to be working on a basic version of Office for the iPad.