We need to have a conversation about your email.

You have a registered business. You have a website. You have a domain name. But when you send invoices to clients, they come from something like `johnkamau254@gmail.com` . When a procurement officer at a large company receives your tender response, they see `yourcompany.tenders@yahoo.com` in their inbox. When your customers get M-Pesa payment confirmations, the follow-up email comes from a personal Gmail account.

We know why. Gmail is free. It works. You have used it for years. Setting up "proper email" sounds complicated and expensive.

It is neither. And the cost of not doing it is higher than you think.

CloudSpinx is a managed IT and email services provider based in Nairobi, Kenya. We have migrated over 40 businesses from free email accounts to professional business email. This post covers exactly what you need to know, how much it costs in KES, and why it matters more than you expect.

The Perception Problem

Let us start with the uncomfortable truth.

When you email a potential client from `john.kamau.biashara@gmail.com` , you are telling them something about your business. Maybe you do not mean to, but you are. You are saying: "We have not invested in basic business infrastructure."

Is that fair? Not really. Your work quality has nothing to do with your email address. But perception matters, especially when you are competing for contracts.

We worked with a Nairobi-based security firm last year. Good company. Solid reputation. They had been losing tenders to competitors and could not figure out why. We cannot say the email address was the only reason, but when they switched from `@gmail.com` to `@theircompany.co.ke` , the feedback they got from procurement contacts changed

noticeably. "You look more established now" was the exact comment from one government agency contact.

First impressions happen before the meeting. They happen in the inbox.

The Security Problem (This One Is Serious)

The perception issue is one thing. The security issue is another, and it is far more dangerous.

When you use a free Gmail or Yahoo account for business, you have zero email authentication. That means:

Anyone can send email pretending to be you. Without SPF, DKIM, and DMARC records (more on these below), there is nothing stopping a scammer from sending an email that looks like it came from your business. Your clients receive a "payment details have changed" email, pay into the wrong account, and blame you.

This is not hypothetical. We have seen it happen to three Kenyan businesses in the past year alone. One lost KES 1.2 million because a supplier received a fraudulent invoice with "updated bank details."

With a properly configured business email domain, those authentication records tell every email server in the world: "Only these specific servers are allowed to send email on behalf of our domain." Anything else gets flagged or rejected.

Our [cybersecurity team](#) covers email security in every audit we do. It is the single most impactful security improvement most SMEs can make.

Your Options: M365 vs Google Workspace vs Zoho

Three realistic options for Kenyan businesses. Here is the honest comparison.

Microsoft 365 Business Basic

- **Cost:** KES 780/user/month (USD 6)
- **What you get:** Business email (50GB mailbox), Teams, OneDrive (1TB), web versions of Word, Excel, PowerPoint
- **Best for:** Businesses that already use Microsoft Office, need Teams for video calls, or work with government/corporate clients who share Office documents
- [Microsoft 365 plans ↗](#)

Google Workspace Business Starter

- **Cost:** KES 910/user/month (USD 7)
- **What you get:** Business Gmail (30GB), Google Meet, Google Drive (30GB), Docs, Sheets, Slides

- **Best for:** Teams that already live in Google's ecosystem, prefer browser-based tools, or have employees who work from multiple devices
- [Google Workspace pricing ↗](#)

Zoho Mail Workplace

- **Cost:** KES 390/user/month (USD 3)
- **What you get:** Business email (30GB), Zoho Docs, 5GB cloud storage, basic CRM
- **Best for:** Cost-conscious businesses that just need email and are willing to work with a less familiar interface
- [Zoho Mail plans ↗](#)

Our recommendation: Google Workspace for most Kenyan SMEs. The interface is familiar (everyone already knows Gmail), the mobile apps work well on Android (which 85% of Kenyan smartphone users run), and the collaboration features are solid. Microsoft 365 if your clients expect Office document formats or you need Teams as your primary video platform.

Zoho is the budget option and it works fine. The email is reliable. But the calendar and document tools are not as polished as Google or Microsoft, and your staff will need more time to adjust.

For a company of 15 people, you are looking at KES 11,700 - 13,650 per month depending o which platform you pick. That is less than what most businesses spend on office tea and coffee.

What SPF, DKIM, and DMARC Actually Mean

These three acronyms protect your email from forgery. If your business domain does not have them configured, you should fix that this week. Here is what they do in plain language

SPF (Sender Policy Framework): A DNS record that says "only these servers can send email from our domain." Like a guest list at the door.

```
v=spf1 include:_spf.google.com ~all
```

This record says: Google's mail servers can send email for us. Nobody else should.

DKIM (DomainKeys Identified Mail): A digital signature attached to every email you send. The receiving server checks this signature against a public key in your DNS. If they match, the email is genuine. If not, it is probably forged.

```
v=DKIM1; k=rsa; p=MIGfMA0GCSqGSIb3DQEBAQUAA4GNADCBiQKBgQ...
```

DMARC (Domain-based Message Authentication, Reporting & Conformance): Tells other mail servers what to do when they receive email from your domain that fails SPF and DKIM checks. Reject it? Quarantine it? Just report it?

```
v=DMARC1; p=quarantine; rua=mailto:dmarc-reports@yourcompany.co.ke; pct=100
```

This record says: if an email claims to be from our domain but fails authentication, quarantine it. And send us reports so we know someone tried.

All three of these are DNS TXT records. Setting them up takes about 30 minutes if you know what you are doing. Google Workspace and Microsoft 365 both provide the exact records to add during setup. If you are not comfortable editing DNS records, our email and collaboration team handles this as part of every migration.

How We Migrate Businesses Without Losing Emails

The biggest fear we hear: "What if we lose our old emails?"

You will not. Here is the process we follow, and we have done it dozens of times with zero data loss.

Step 1: Set up the new platform. Create all user accounts on Google Workspace or M365. Do not change any DNS records yet. Old email keeps flowing normally.

Step 2: Migrate historical email. Google and Microsoft both have migration tools that pull in all existing email from Gmail, Yahoo, or any IMAP-compatible provider. Every email, every folder, every attachment. This runs in the background and usually takes 2-8 hours depending on how much email you have.

Step 3: Verify everything migrated. Each user checks their account, confirms their old emails are there, and sets up the new account on their phone and laptop.

Step 4: Switch DNS. Update MX records to point to the new platform. This is the moment o truth, and it takes about 5 minutes. After this, new email starts flowing to the new system.

```
# MX records for Google Workspace
@ MX 1 ASPMX.L.GOOGLE.COM.
@ MX 5 ALT1.ASPMX.L.GOOGLE.COM.
@ MX 5 ALT2.ASPMX.L.GOOGLE.COM.
@ MX 10 ALT3.ASPMX.L.GOOGLE.COM.
@ MX 10 ALT4.ASPMX.L.GOOGLE.COM.
```

Step 5: Add SPF, DKIM, and DMARC. Configure authentication records as described above

Step 6: Monitor for 48 hours. DNS propagation can take up to 48 hours globally (usually much faster). We monitor both the old and new systems during this period to make sure nothing falls through the cracks.

The entire process usually takes 1-2 days from start to finish. We schedule the DNS switch for a Saturday morning when email volume is low. By Monday, your team walks in and everything just works.

What About Self-Hosted Email?

Every few months, someone asks us: "Can we just run our own mail server? Then there are no monthly fees."

Our honest answer: please do not.

Running your own email server in 2026 means you are responsible for:

- Keeping the server patched and secure (email servers are prime targets)
- Managing spam filtering (and it is an arms race that never ends)
- Maintaining your IP reputation so your emails do not land in spam
- Handling SPF, DKIM, DMARC, TLS certificates, and DANE records
- Backing up mailboxes
- Providing webmail access
- Keeping storage from filling up when someone has 47,000 unread emails

We have run mail servers. We ran Postfix + Dovecot stacks for years. The amount of maintenance involved is absurd relative to the cost of Google Workspace or M365. Unless you have a specific regulatory requirement that prohibits using cloud-hosted email (and we

have not encountered this in Kenya), just pay the KES 800/user/month. Your time is worth more than that.
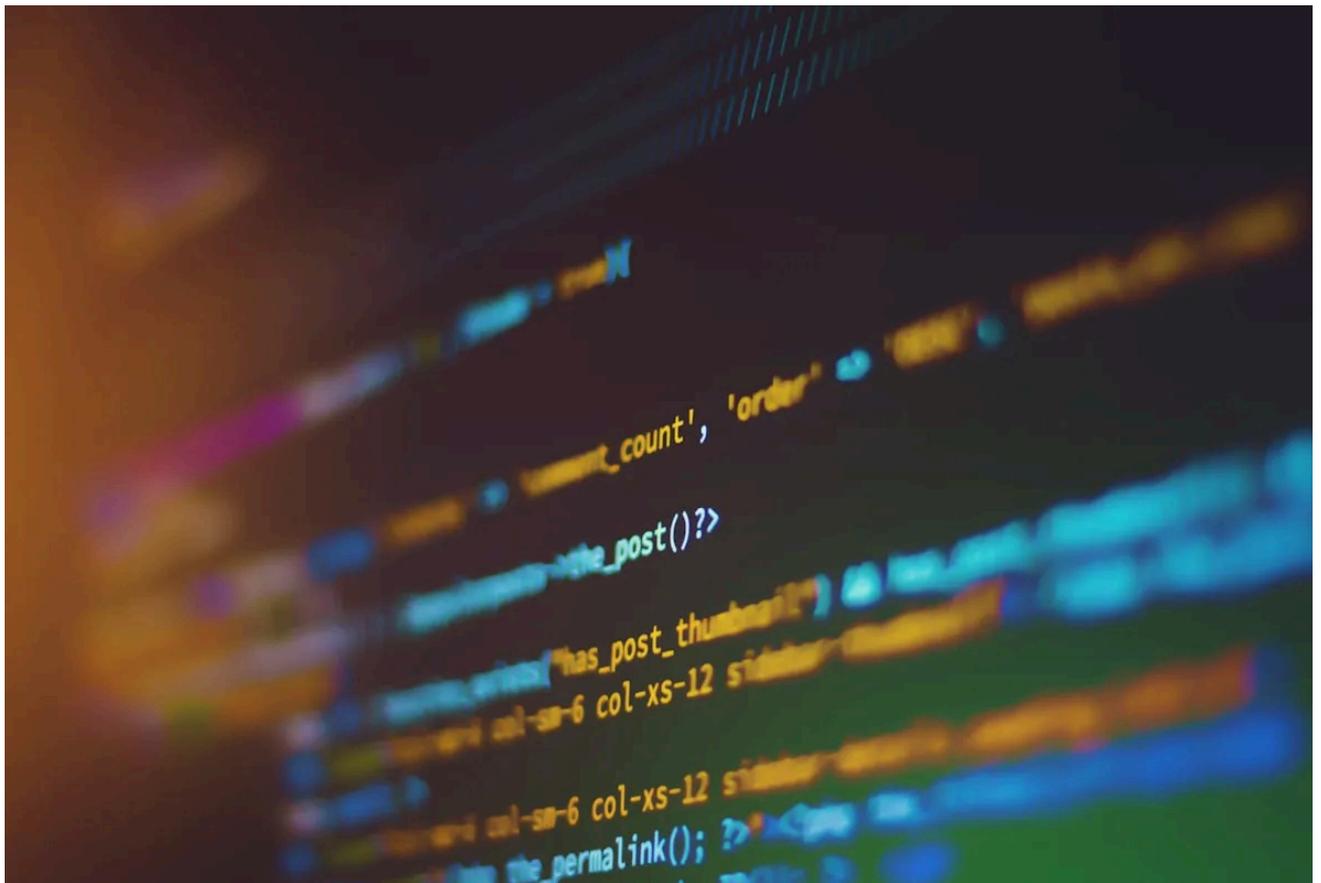
Quick Wins You Can Do Today

Even before migrating to a proper email platform:

1. **Register your domain** if you have not already. A `.co.ke` domain costs about KES 1,200/year from KENIC-accredited registrars.
2. **Set up SPF for your current email** even if you are on Gmail. This at least provides basic sender authentication.
3. **Stop using shared email accounts.** Five people sharing `sales@gmail.com` is a security and accountability disaster. Each person should have their own account.
4. **Enable 2-factor authentication** on every email account. Use an authenticator app, not SMS (SIM swap fraud is real in Kenya).
5. **Create an email signature** with your business name, phone number, and website. This costs nothing and looks professional immediately.

For the full setup, talk to our managed IT team. We handle the migration end-to-end, including DNS changes, data transfer, staff training, and mobile device configuration. Your

team shows up Monday morning to a working professional email system.

If your website and email are both due for an upgrade, we often bundle these together.

Frequently Asked Questions

How long does it take to migrate from Gmail to Google Workspace?

One to two days for most businesses. The email migration itself runs in the background and takes 2-8 hours. The DNS switchover takes 5 minutes. We schedule it for a weekend to minimize disruption. By Monday morning, everything is working on the new platform.

Will we lose any emails during the migration?

No. We migrate historical emails before changing DNS records. During the switchover period, emails are delivered to both the old and new systems. We have completed over 40 email migrations with zero data loss.

Can we keep our existing phone numbers and WhatsApp Business?

Yes. Email migration has nothing to do with your phone setup. Your WhatsApp Business, M-Pesa notifications, and SMS services are completely unaffected.

What happens if we outgrow the storage limit?

Google Workspace Starter gives 30GB per user. Microsoft 365 gives 50GB. For most business users, this is plenty. If someone hits the limit (usually because they never delete anything), you can upgrade to the next plan tier or archive old emails.

Do we need to update email on everyone's phones?

Yes, but it is straightforward. For Google Workspace, staff just sign in with their new email address on their phone's Gmail app. For Microsoft 365, they install the Outlook app. We include mobile setup in every migration project, and typically walk through it with each staff member.

What if some staff are not tech-savvy?

This is common and we plan for it. Google Workspace looks and feels exactly like regular Gmail, so the adjustment is minimal. We provide a 30-minute training session as part of every migration. The most common questions: "Where are my old emails?" (they are all there) and "How do I add this to my phone?" (we do it for them).

Is our email backed up on Google Workspace or Microsoft 365?

Both platforms replicate your data across multiple data centres, so hardware failure will not cause data loss. However, if someone accidentally deletes emails, recovery depends on the plan. We recommend configuring retention policies and, for critical businesses, adding a third-party backup tool like Veeam or Spanning. Our [cloud infrastructure team](#) can set this up.

Can we use business email with our existing website hosting?

Yes. Email and website hosting are completely separate. Your website can be hosted anywhere, your domain registrar does not matter, and your email provider is independent of both. The only connection is the DNS records, which point web traffic to your hosting server and email to your email provider.

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