gamechanger
Game Changing Technology for Office 365 Migration

What You Need To Know About Office 365 Tenant Migrations

Mergers and acquisitions often necessitate tenant-to-tenant or cross-tenant migrations.

In this new "cloud first" world, more organizations are moving to Office 365. While the expectation is that your migration into Office 365 is going to be your last migration for those services, some organizations find they need to migrate some or all their resources into a new Office 365 tenant.

Mergers and acquisitions are often the impetus for tenant-to-tenant (or cross-tenant) migrations, but there can be many different reasons to start a migration from one tenant to another. Whatever the reason, if your organization decides to migrate to a different tenant, there are many different considerations you must include in your migration planning.

WHY MIGRATE BETWEEN TENANTS?

The decision to start an Office 365 cross-tenant migration should not be taken lightly. Office 365 is not designed to accommodate this type of migration. Microsoft's plan is for you to move your existing data into Office 365, then stay put forever. Unfortunately, that is not a reasonable possibility for some organizations.

Whether your organization is taking control of another organization or part of your organization is splitting off to a separate business unit, these sorts of M&A activities take place all the time in the business world and IT departments must deal with the fall out. Migrations often come with compressed timelines and requirements around domain name branding. In many cases, IT departments are not given specific information about what users need to be moved to what tenant on what dates until the last minute.

The second most common reason for organizations to do an Office 365 cross-tenant migration is data sovereignty. Businesses with an international footprint are often subject to data sovereignty laws in specific regions. Germany and China are two countries where Microsoft has setup local partnerships to build separate versions of Office 365 to meet data sovereignty requirements. Versions of Office 365 in China and Germany run completely separately from Microsoft's main Office 365 instance to comply with local requirements. If your organization does business in these regions, you may have to use these services.

While these two reasons are the most common ones for Office 365 cross-tenant migration, they are not the only ones. Whatever the reasons for moving your data between Office 365 tenants, Microsoft will not be there to help.

PLANNING YOUR MIGRATION

Once your organization decides to pursue a cross-tenant migration, the only thing standing between you and a disastrous experience is planning and the proper tools.

Kapralcev / Shutterstock.com

Depending on the data in use and the services your organization needs, your migration plan may vary quite a bit. Migrating Exchange data is different from migrating SharePoint data. Migrating Yammer data isn't really an option. Email is often the primary concern for organizations performing this type of migration, but it's important to ensure you know what data is important to your end-users and what their expectations about that data migration are.

Once your organization decides to pursue a cross-tenant migration, the only thing standing between you and a disastrous experience is planning and the proper tools.

Features and functionality of Office 365 services are constantly being updated and this is likely to have an impact on what data you are migrating. Do your users need shared mailboxes migrated? Site mailboxes? Public folders? Distribution lists? Do your users need the permissions currently set on these resources to be preserved? Will these resources need to be available to users in other tenants?

The best practice recommendation is for Exchange administrators to take an end-user survey of the features and functionality within the messaging platform. Understand what features users consider "must haves," then plan your migration process from there.

TROUBLE SPOTS TO WATCH FOR

During any migration project, there are going to be spots when problems are more likely to occur. When you change DNS records for your cutover, or when you kick off a script that changes permissions on resources are examples.

With an Office 365 cross-tenant migration there are many trouble spots you'll need to watch out for including:

■ **Global Address List** – The Global Address List (GAL) is a core feature most email users don't even think about. The ability to look up any user in your organization from your Outlook client is so basic these days it is often overlooked until it's gone. A cross-tenant migration means that the GAL for each tenant is separate. Users in tenant A will not see users in tenant B in their GAL unless complex manual actions are taken. This can make the migration period very troublesome.

■ **Calendar look ups** – Much like the GAL, scheduling meetings within an organization often relies on the calendar look ups performed within Outlook. As users are moved between two separate tenants, they will not have the ability to schedule meetings and look up availability of users in the other tenant without manual configuration. During the migration period, users will need another plan for scheduling meetings.

■ **Email addresses** – One of the basic requirements for an Office 365 tenant is that a vanity domain name can only be assigned to one tenant. If your organization uses @XYZ.com as the email vanity domain, that needs to be assigned to one and only one Office 365 tenant. Users in the second Office 365 tenant need to use a different vanity domain. That may be US.XYZ.com, or it may be a separate vanity domain. How you handle user email addresses during the migration period is a key consideration for a cross-tenant migration.

■ **Distribution lists** – Setting up and maintaining distribution lists within a single Office 365 tenant can be a difficult task. If your distribution lists are copied from your on-premises Active Directory via AAD Connect, your users will not be able to modify distribution list membership within Outlook. If your distribution lists are sourced from Azure AD, then there is no native tool to migrate those distribution lists between Office 365 tenants.

Email is often the primary concern for organizations performing this type of migration, but it's important to ensure you know what data is important to your end-users and what their expectations about that data migration are.

These and many other issues can cause your Office 365 cross-tenant migration to go badly very fast. Knowing what data your users need, and how they access that data will get you started but then you need to plan to ensure that data is available to your users when they expect it.

Three Game Changing Capabilities of Binary Tree's Power365

This is technology that does not exist natively within Office 365.

There are three game changing capabilities Binary Tree's Power365 Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) Platform introduces to the administrator that currently do not exist natively within Office 365 or in the migration market today. First, the Power365 platform presents the ability to selectively choose how to maintain vanity email domains during a migration event or for long-term coexistence to maintain brand identity. Secondly, a continuous Day One address list sync or GALSync between all configured on-premises Active Directory environments ensures end-users can maintain basic collaboration capabilities. Third, the automated configuration of calendar

Power365 ensures end-users continue to collaborate and work with colleagues no matter what Office 365 tenant their mailbox resides in.

availability sharing guarantees colleagues in different Office 365 tenants can plan and schedule meetings with each other without additional effort or training.

Power365 enables end-users to be automatically selected for address rewrite capabilities in real-time based on project need through Azure Active Directory group membership. For instance, there might be a Day One need for all mailboxes within an acquired company to start sending as a vanity domain that is configured within the acquiring company's Office 365 tenant. Conversely, there might be a requirement for all end-user mailboxes to maintain his or her email addresses as they are migrated to the new Office 365 tenant. The magic of this feature is that this capability exists even though the vanity domain still resides in the tenant the mailboxes came from. The latter requirement is often a basic prerequisite when a complete cutover activity cannot be completed within several hours.

Furthering the collaboration story is the ability to ensure end-users can look up contacts from all configured Office

365 environments. This feature provides a Day One unified address list or directory that is independent of which tenant a mailbox resides in. The game changing feature here is the automated capability to orchestrate changes directly to on-premises Active Directory objects that are synchronizing to Azure AD within a Power365 project. There is no need for those pesky PowerShell scripts as Power365 provides complete automation! Keep in mind that once on-premises Active Directory objects are syncing to Azure AD they become the source of truth for that identity. The Power365 platform automates the process of creating, modifying, or deleting contacts, remote mailboxes, mail-enabled groups and ensuring membership in configured groups are always up-to-date. Finally, a solution that can author changes directly against on-premises Active Directory objects!

The last game changing feature within Power365 is calendar availability information is easily accessible for configured end-users within all required Office 365 tenants. This allows the administrator to not worry about setting up the required federation trust and configuring organizational relationships between Office 365 tenants. Power365 sets up and configures these items on behalf of the administrator to ensure a consistent end user collaboration experience.

As with most migration projects, the ability to achieve high-velocity with full fidelity is critical to overall project success. Not to be outdone, Power365 introduces blistering migration capabilities for mail and public folders.

Power365 ensures your end-users continue to collaborate and work with colleagues no matter what Office 365 tenant their mailbox resides in. To the end-user, the integration between multiple Office 365 tenants is transparent and allows for productivity to continue uninterrupted.

These three game changing capabilities mitigate project risk while ensuring profitability is maintained by not disrupting the end-users day-to-day job function. If you find yourself tasked with a cross-tenant migration project look no further as Power365 will provide the game changing features to unlock success!

Find out more www.binarytree.com

BINARY TREE™
Powering Enterprise Transformations™