

GAMECHANGER - OFFICE 365 IS A GAME-CHANGING TECHNOLOGY FOR IT

Businesses are created because their founders are skilled at providing a product, good or service. These founders often have a passion for whatever it is their business does, and this passion allows them to make a living doing something they are great at. Many great business founders have followed this path, creating a business to do what they love and then finding out there is considerably more to running a business than the narrow focus that originally inspired the endeavor. As many have learned, running a business requires expertise in accounting, marketing, sales, management, recruiting and many other disciplines, including IT. This is why Office 365 is such a game changer.

Like it or not, one person can only be expert in so many things. As the systems that we depend upon to support and run our businesses become more and more complicated, it is necessary to rely on experts who can help us get the most out of our IT systems. With Office 365 the world's largest software company can become your expert for your IT infrastructure. Office 365, and the cloud in general, allows you to focus on what your organization does best.

Office 365 is a suite of products including: Exchange Online for messaging, SharePoint Online for document management, Skype for Business Online for instant messaging and public switched telephone and Office Pro Plus for desktop productivity applications like Word and Excel. With a single subscription



that you pay for per user per month, Microsoft's Office 365 offering can give you a high quality IT infrastructure at a very reasonable price.

The most popular service in the Office 365 suite is Exchange Online because messaging is an ideal workload to move to the cloud. Every year companies are putting more and more data into email messaging platforms, and thus relying more and more heavily on those platforms as a

communications backbone for getting the job done. As messaging platforms develop more features and functionality, they become more difficult to maintain. Unless your organization is large enough to employ several experts dedicated to understanding and maintaining your messaging platform, it's probably a good idea to allow the people at Microsoft, who created the platform, to deploy and maintain that infrastructure for you.

THE HYBRID CLOUD

One of the great foundations for success of Office 365 is that Microsoft has built a flexible platform you can integrate with your existing IT infrastructure. For a startup, it might be a viable option to spin up a new Office 365 tenant and start from scratch with an all new environment. However, an existing organization likely has data already in multiple platforms that is too valuable for the business to leave behind and not merge with the new environment. Part of the magic of Office 365 is that each

UP TO DATE SOFTWARE

Another benefit of Office 365 is having all your software kept up to date for you. New versions of Exchange, SharePoint, and Skype for Business are automatically deployed within your tenant for you without you having to worry about a big migration project. With Office 365 you will always have the most current versions of software. You'll always have the newest and best features.

However, this benefit extends to more than just major version updates. Microsoft releases patches for

in the on-premises versions, they are rarely used because of the difficulty in configuring and maintaining them. Site mailboxes is a great example of a feature that integrates Exchange and SharePoint, but was not used much at all because of the difficulty with its deployment and maintenance.

Conversely, Office 365 Groups is a feature, which integrates Exchange, SharePoint, Project, Yammer and other Office 365 services, that has enjoyed widespread use since its introduction. Microsoft can't release this sort of tightly integrated feature into the on-premises versions of this software for fear that it would be unscriptable.

PART OF THE MAGIC OF OFFICE 365 IS EACH CONSTITUENT SERVICE CAN BE CONFIGURED WITH HYBRID OPTIONS FOR CO-EXISTENCE WITH EXISTING MICROSOFT SOLUTIONS.

constituent service can be configured with hybrid options that allow co-existence with your organization's existing on-premises Microsoft solutions. As you move to Office 365 you can maintain your existing environments. You can even maintain the on-premises infrastructure in conjunction with Office 365 indefinitely.

Exchange, for example, has an excellent hybrid configuration that allows your organization's existing on-premises Exchange deployment to co-exist with Office 365's Exchange Online, so that it will appear to be a single Exchange environment to your users. This means everyone, both on-premises and cloud users, will see the same global address list and be able to send and receive email messages from each other just as if they were all hosted on your Exchange servers.

Windows Server every month. These patches include security and stability fixes, and they are often essential for ensuring that your IT infrastructure is secure. Studies show that very few organizations keep these patches completely updated. In many customer environments, Windows Server patches are months or even years behind. When you move to Office 365, Microsoft takes care of keeping all the servers patched and secured.

BETTER INTEGRATION

There are still more advantages to having Microsoft deploy and manage your Exchange, SharePoint, and Skype for Business infrastructures. It has long been a goal of Microsoft's to provide better integration between these platforms. The problem is that deploying and maintaining these integrations is very difficult. Even when integration features are available

THE FUTURE OF IT

Predicting the future of any technology is impossible. Where are the jetpacks and personal robot butlers many of us were led in our youth to expect to have by now?

The good news is that with the flexible nature of Office 365, we don't need to get Carnac the Magnificent to know what the future holds. We know Microsoft is going to continue to focus their development efforts on making Office 365 the premier offering for hosting your organization's IT infrastructure.

There's no way to know what new developments Microsoft will bring to Office 365 over the next few years, but you can be sure that they'll work to make managing the information and communications that your organization is built on even better.

The flip side to that is that Office 365 is not a "complete solution" today. While Microsoft continues to make on-going investments in areas like data protection, data archiving, and systems availability within Office 365 everyone will agree there are still improvements that need to be made. Sometimes a third party can provide added services to "fill in the gaps" in your Office 365 service.

Mimecast Manages the Risks of Cloud Email

Office 365 is a great leap forward for how organizations deploy and manage their IT infrastructures, but the story does not stop there. Even with the full force of Microsoft working to make the infrastructure great, there are still risks that need to be addressed. Here are three areas where Mimecast can improve the strengths of your Office 365 tenant to make an even better combined solution.

EMAIL SECURITY - FIGHT BACK AGAINST SPAM, MALWARE AND PHISHING

Two-thirds of all the email in the world is spam (Federal Trade Commission) and ever evolving targeted threats, such as spear-phishing and whaling, are a rising concern. With that in mind, anti-spam, anti-virus and protection for your Office 365 users are very important considerations. For on-premises environments, best practices included a defense in depth strategy that ensured optimal email security. The cloud is no different and making sure you have multiple layers and the ability to provide security awareness training is essential.

AN INDEPENDENT BACKUP OF YOUR DATA

As compliance requirements become more and more important to the health and success of businesses, having an independent archive of your data is a good practice. This is true whether you are meeting industry regulations or ensuring the business can respond quickly to litigation. What's more, having the ability to backup and restore your data separate from the email delivery service is a requirement that should be considered as you migrate from on-premises to the cloud.



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KEEP EMAIL ON, EVEN WHEN THE CLOUD (OFFICE 365) ISN'T

Office 365 is a robust service built to provide excellent uptime and availability. Microsoft has invested in multiple datacenters, data replication, and all the best high availability technologies. With all that, no technology is perfect and if something goes wrong, your users will look to the IT department to restore service, not Office 365. Office 365 has experienced several outages over the last few years, and we can assume Office 365 has not seen its last outage. When outages do happen, having a solution in place that will allow your users access to their mailboxes is invaluable. Mimecast's email

continuity service enables users to access their email even when Office 365 is down.

Office 365 is a great decision for organizations looking to reduce the complexity and costs of managing email. But it's imperative to plan for potential problems. With Mimecast and Office 365, you get always-on email, multiple layers of security, a plan b archive and the confidence of eliminating potential risks.



Safeguard your email in Office 365.
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