



An Introduction to Microsoft Office 365

a ramsac guide

What is Microsoft Office 365?

Microsoft Office 365 was first released in 2011. Since then the product range has grown quite significantly, and it is now the defacto way of purchasing and licensing Microsoft's Office applications.

In simple terms, Office 365 replaces the way we used to buy applications from Microsoft. Rather than buying a license outright and attaching that to a specific machine, we now license the user on a 'cost per month' basis which means the licensed user can access Microsoft applications on all of their devices (including mobiles and Apple devices) and it means you pay for what you use – if you increase or decrease your user base, your monthly billing changes accordingly.

So much more than 'Office'

Perhaps the biggest change however, is that this is not 'Office' as we know it! For so many years, Microsoft Office has meant Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook. Office 365 is much more than that, with an ever-increasing portfolio of applications that enable you to collaborate more, work with increasing levels of security, work more flexibly (think, 'any device, anytime, anywhere') and reduce your reliance on always being attached to a server.

In this short white paper, we layout the core benefits, and address some of the questions you might have if you're considering migrating to Office 365 for the first time.



Core benefits of Office 365



Any **device**, any **time**, any **where**

We live in a world where 'work' is no longer a place that you go, it's what you do. Employees yearn for flexibility and there's a huge amount of data to back up what a positive impact it has on a firm when you stop thinking of work as always having to happen at the same desk in the same office!

Office 365 allows you to store your data in the cloud, and to install the applications

across all of your devices. So it's easy to work on a document in the office, pick up reviewing it on your mobile whilst on the train ride to your next meeting, and finish editing it on your home PC when you arrive home at the end of the day.

Documents are available via any internet enabled device meaning that it is not only possible, but actually very simple, to enable a truly mobile workforce.



Simple monthly **budgeting**

With Office 365 you pay for what you want, for as long as you want. You can mix different license types, providing simple email only access to contractors, full office suite for employees, and add things like Audio Conferencing and Mobile Device Management to more mobile staff. It's up to you to define who gets what, and if your user numbers change, or you

employ seasonal workers for a short period, you can increase or decrease your subscription accordingly. And don't forget, you license the user, not the machine, so one license allows you to work on all of your devices, or you can access web based versions of each product if you're working on a temporary machine.



Single, simple **login**

Because all of the commonly used applications and document storage are all accessible with your Microsoft Office 365 account, it's simple and easy to

access the data you need, from any internet enabled device, with one user password. No more VPNs to connect to your shared data!



Less email, more collaboration

In our social lives, we have become less and less reliant on email. Communication between groups of friends more often than not, now happens using group chats on platforms such as WhatsApp, Messenger or FaceTime. But when it comes to work, we still default to email. Email is far from being dead, but we never meet a customer that doesn't feel that they could benefit from having less of it! As a means of passing a message from one person to another, it's still a good tool, but it's not collaborative, it

doesn't promote debate or conversation. Microsoft have addressed this changing communication style, with collaborative tools such as 'Teams' which allows groups of people to work together, sharing documents in real time (think multiple people editing documents at the same time) as well as video-based team calls using Skype for Business technology, screen sharing, project planning tools and more, all in one window.



Security as standard

With all of this data in the cloud, and the option to access it on a plethora of devices, security has never been more important. By enabling the right Office 365 features, you can set up full enterprise class, mobile device management, meaning you can control not only who accesses your data, but on what device, built to a level of security that you define (think specified versions of operating system, patched and up to date, with antivirus installed and with enforced device pin codes or passwords) and you

can choose to remotely wipe company data if a user loses a device, or leaves your organisation. You can also enable individuals to apply policies to specific emails, for example preventing an email from being read outside your organisation, or reducing the right to forward or print an email. And to really lock things down, two-factor authentication adds another layer of protection, forcing users to enter a code sent to their mobile device as well as their traditional password.



No more product updates

With Office 365 you will always have access to the latest product version, so no more version upgrade projects, or having

team members with different versions of Office installed.



Cloud storage - with simple and secure ways of sharing

Whether it's personal file storage using OneDrive (a more corporate version of DropBox) or organisation wide storage using SharePoint, it's now easy to store documents in the cloud. You can have the documents that you rely on synchronised off line so you can work on them even when you're not connected to the internet, and these tools also give you the option to decide who you want to share

documents or folders with, either internally or with external contacts. At the click of a mouse you can decide who can see what, who can edit and whether you want access to be for a limited amount of time. And because this is all cloud based, there is built in resilience and flexibility, with the option to restore previous versions or recover lost documents all built in.



Continuity built in

Because all of the data and applications are cloud based, using highly resilient, multi site replicated data centres, you are no longer tied to your office location.

So when the snow comes, or if the office is flooded, staff can just work from wherever they can get online.



Easier compliance

In Office 365, all data resides within the organisation's account, access to which can be centrally controlled. By providing your employees with the right tools for the job, there is no longer a need for them to be saving documents outside of your systems, or even attaching sensitive data

to insecure emails which makes compliance with regulations such as GDPR so much easier. Add to that, the ability to control the editing and deletion rights of users and you end up with much greater control and better data governance.

The Office 365 products

There are dozens of options in Office 365, and it can seem overwhelming. Here's a very quick summary of some of the most popular features

User applications

Office Suite

All the products you're used to, including Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook



OneNote



A digital notebook, that allows you to ditch the paper and create organised notebooks which can be shared with others to create collaborative customer or meeting notes.

OneDrive

Up to 1TB of cloud based storage per user as standard (additional storage can be purchased as needed) - replaces 'home' network drives or worse, users saving documents on their desktops! Provides access to documents from any device with the ability to easily share folders or files with others, including those outside your organisation.



Teams

Collaborative work spaces that combine features of Skype, OneNote, OneDrive and many applications, into one central location.



Planner

A great tool for task and project management.

Find Time

A great tool for meeting organisers – set up meeting polls and easily administer responses to ensure minimal email tennis in trying to co-ordinate multiple people's diaries



Stream

An internal 'youtube' channel – a tool for sharing video content across your organisation

Flow

A tool that allows you to automate repetitive tasks with easy workflow automation



Organisation wide tools

SharePoint

A cloud based service, hosted by Microsoft, that business can use to store, share and access information from any device as long as you have an internet connection.



PowerBI

A business analytics solution that connects to multiple data sources and allows you to visualise your data and share insights across the business.

Azure AD

Microsoft's cloud-based identity management service (central user account management in the cloud) that replaces the traditional Active Directory server, allowing for thorough user account management and control.



Enterprise Mobility Suite

A suite of tools that integrate with Office 365 to provide extra control over your company's data. Think mobile device control, the ability to send secure emails and the ability to control who can edit, access and delete what.

Voice conferencing

An add on for Skype for Business or Teams, which means people can call into meetings using a phone, instead of using the Skype for Business app on a mobile device or PC.

Managing your migration

A successful Office 365 deployment is highly dependent on thorough planning. It's vital that you understand how it will fit into your organisation from all angles. For every business, it's wise to seek impartial, expert advice before beginning a migration, to help you achieve business continuity during the deployment process and realising the value of Office 365 into the future.

Once in use, the system is relatively simple for end users to navigate but getting data migrated properly and ensuring that data security is properly set up requires experienced planning.

In our experience, it is also important to factor in a programme of end user training to ensure that you really maximise on your IT investment.

Finally as with all things IT, regular proactive management and monitoring is always the key to long term, smooth running, secure technology.

● Find out more

ramsac is a Microsoft Gold Cloud Specialist, we have migrated many firms to the Office 365 platform.

We can help with all aspects of planning, migrating and working within Office 365 to ensure a positive experience for your organisation.

To find out more or book an initial consultation:

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