

WHY COMPANIES ARE CONTINUING TO MOVE TO

OFFICE 365

BY MICHAEL REMER, PRESIDENT, COMPUTERCARE LLC

Most of us have comfortably used Microsoft Office products for years, although we usually underutilize them. However, this suite has undergone some significant changes, and many companies are seeing the benefits of the new version of Office. And by new, I mean 2011. That year marked the release of Office 365, Microsoft's cloud-based platform that includes hosted Exchange email, online storage, web meetings, video conferencing, Internet calls, intranet services and browser-based versions of our favorites, Word and Excel. As the use of cloud products continues to grow, so has the use of Office 365, and here are a few reasons why:

EASE OF ACCESS

With more users needing to access these applications from anywhere, a cloud-based solution makes sense. Companies that use active directory see the most bang for their buck here because of the seamless integration between the on-site Windows server and the cloud-based applications. In addition, there are mobile versions of the Office 365 applications available for Android and Apple iOS combined with the web version, meaning you can use your Microsoft Office products virtually anywhere.

EASE OF MAINTENANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Office 365's cloud portal makes it very easy to manage users, change permissions and passwords and assign

different levels of available licenses on a per-user basis or as a group. Creating new email addresses, distribution lists and aliases has never been easier. Searching for lost, deleted, or otherwise blocked email that was not delivered for one reason or another can also be done through a very intuitive interface.

COST AND FLEXIBILITY

Depending on the needs of your organization, Office 365 offers several

plans that companies can subscribe to. Whether you are a mid-sized business with an internal or partner-supported IT arm, a smaller one completely without dedicated IT staff or even an educational organization, there is an Office 365 plan (plus add-ons) for you. Office 365 plans are not expensive, especially when you consider not having to invest in individual copies of Microsoft Office software or maintain an on-premise email server solution. You can sign up for as little as \$4 per user per month for the hosted Exchange platform, and



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between that plan and the “Cadillac” of plans (Office 365 Enterprise E3 for \$20 per user per month), there are several other options that can suit your business’s needs.

OFFICE 365 GOING FORWARD

For companies that have been reluctant to integrate a cloud-based office solution, Microsoft has made the choice for you: integrate, or be left behind. This decision comes with the release of Office 2013, a new version of Office with heavy cloud integration, regardless of version. The business-based versions will all use Office 365 as a platform to deliver and

manage the suite, with the option to stream specific Office programs as you use them.

If your company is looking forward to integrating Office 2013, you will undoubtedly be integrating Office 365 or a modified version of it. The platform and delivery works quite well, and users will find little to no change to the overall feel of the program.

If you’re looking for a cloud office solution, contact your IT provider. They should be familiar with the variety of cloud services and will know what is likely the best fit for you and your business.



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