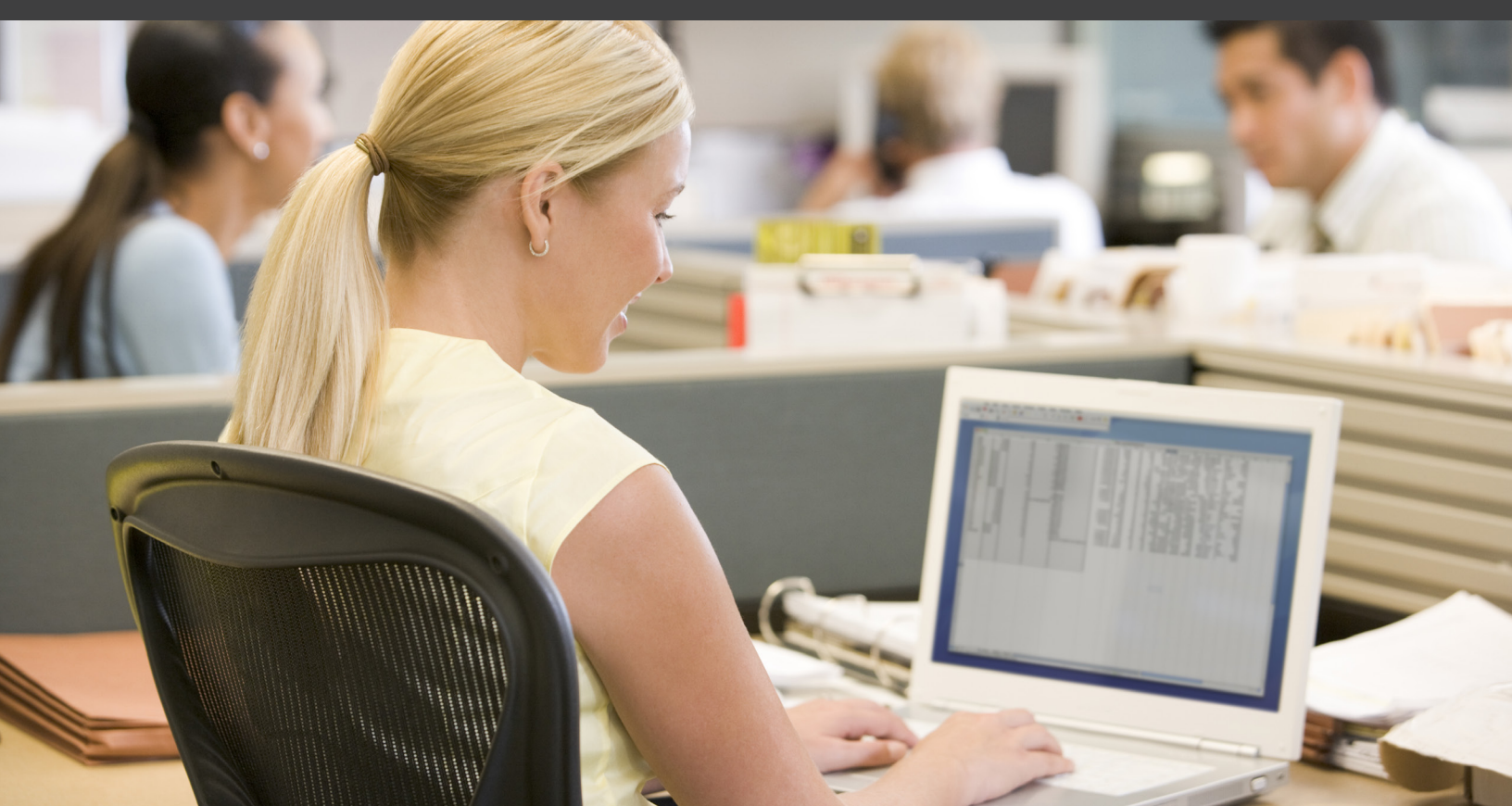




Understanding Office 365: Is A Cloud Based Solution Right For Your Business?

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Introduction

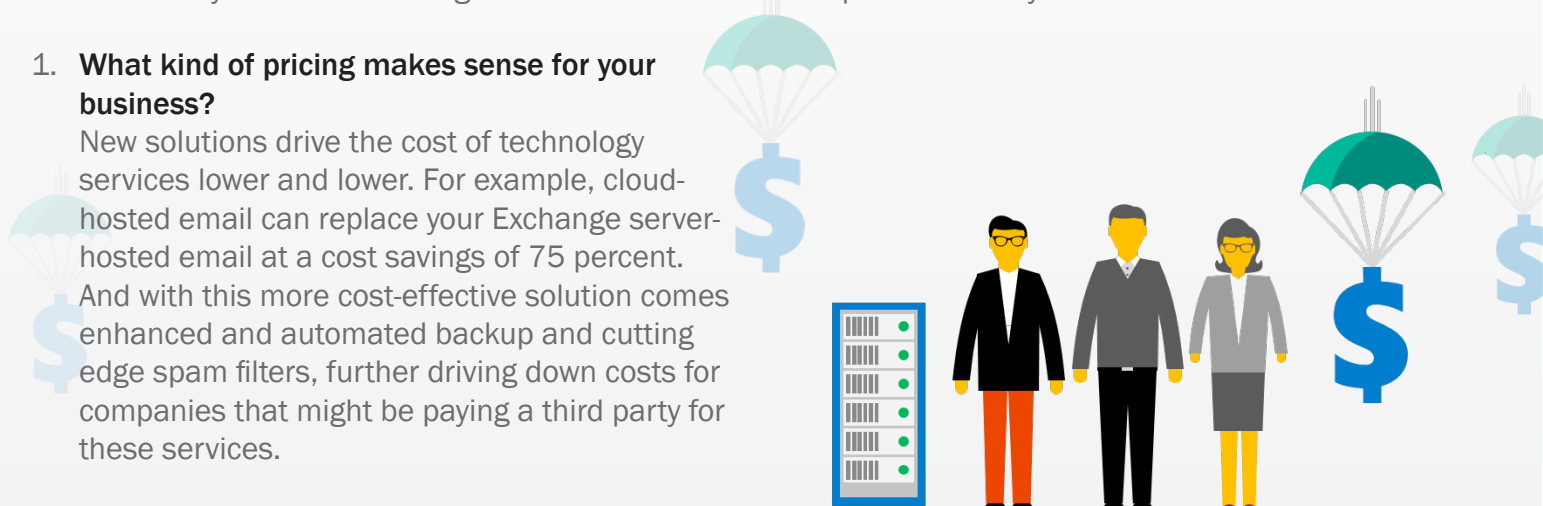
As a small business owner or network supervisor, you face a number of technology pressures on a daily basis. You need to provide your team and your network with easy collaboration, reliable security, and convenient storage, all while keeping your costs as low as possible.

In the past, meeting these challenges required costly equipment and lowered expectations, but new cloud-based solutions might be a perfect fit to meet the needs of your organization. As your business's technology needs grow and evolve, you'll need to evaluate whether or not your current technology can meet the needs of your growing company.

Not sure where to start? Here are four important questions you need to ask yourself in order to identify whether or not your current arrangement meets the critical requirements of your office network:

- 1. What kind of pricing makes sense for your business?**

New solutions drive the cost of technology services lower and lower. For example, cloud-hosted email can replace your Exchange server-hosted email at a cost savings of 75 percent. And with this more cost-effective solution comes enhanced and automated backup and cutting edge spam filters, further driving down costs for companies that might be paying a third party for these services.



Office 365 takes the long view on maintaining and reducing your overhead costs. For a lower price than on-site storage, you can achieve unlimited storage in the cloud. As local data scales with responsibility, so do the costs of storing that data. With cloud computing, businesses can scale indefinitely without adding to physical space and permanent costs.

2. **How easy is it to work with virtual and remote employees?**

Calendars, mail, and data tied to a physical server limits how and when you can access that information. For an increasing number of companies that embrace virtual consultants and employees, having access and frequent backups of your emails and shared data is not optional. You need a solution that allows for that flexibility.



3. **Are my security and compliance needs being met?**

For companies seeking to meet compliance requirements, Exchange servers don't come ready to run out of the box. You must often add plug-ins and features to bring your physical server up to speed. Newer cloud-based solutions like Office 365 come with these features already intact to provide a seamless, secure experience.

4. **Am I backed up?**

Outages and accidental deletions happen. So an important question becomes: how quickly (and from how long ago) could you restore your entire network in the face of an emergency? With a physical, on-site server, the question might be a stressful one to answer. With Office 365's cloud-based storage, you can restore your entire system without the hassle of plugging in or running any new software. You get a built-in backup that is off-site, but not offline.

How quickly (and from how long ago) could you restore your entire network in the face of an emergency?

Each of these questions builds a case for the ultimate question: does your current network setup make it easy to do business? You know you need a functional email system, calendar sharing, remote office users, and, of course, frequent and automated data backups. But is it more efficient to host everything yourself using a costly, outdated patchwork of on-site servers, or could cloud-based applications and storage make doing business more efficient and cost-effective? Now is a great time to consider the amount of cloud-powered connection, collaboration, and control Office 365 can bring to your business.



What is Cloud Computing?

Cloud computing is a term that reflects the early constructions of the internet. Network managers would break down a system by drawing a cloud of computers connected to each other. Moving to the cloud refers to the process of taking your server and putting it into a data center that you can access using the internet. The cloud isn't necessarily doing any computing, but when you send your applications, data, and users to it they have the option to proceed with desktop-based computing or web-based computing.

...you can access up-to-date documents, images, and other business assets from virtually any device...

The most advanced level of “cloud computing” empowers your employees to run programs and complete tasks entirely online. That is where Office 365 comes into play, in which the work itself is performed and saved in the cloud. Office 365 is the same Office you know and use for your daily business tasks. But because the cloud powers Office 365, you can access up-to-date documents, images, and other business assets from virtually any device (PC, Mac, tablet, and mobile).

How Can Cloud Computing Expand Your Business?

The real selling point of Office 365 is what it can do for your business. Cloud computing streamlines and expands four important business functions:

Secure and Accessible File Storage

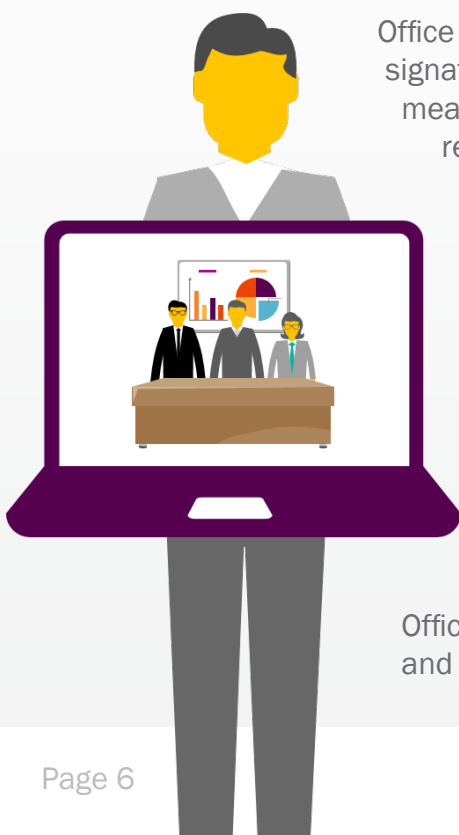
Cloud file storage is the most basic piece of cloud computing. It means that your files are stored off-site but online at a remote data server. You can use any computer anywhere in the world to access your files on this server. All you need is an internet connection.

Office 365 enhances this cloud experience by providing additional security features to any data stored in the cloud. Not only are your assets replicated across multiple data centers, but they are also automatically secured and encrypted against cyber attacks.



Compatible Off-Site Access

Off-site access refers to the ability to coordinate your remote and off-site team members easily from anywhere with a network connection. Instead of requiring each user to install special credentials or download a particular program or application, team member-specific information and assets are readily available with a single sign on.



Office 365 provides this off-site access through cloud-based versions of its signature programs such as Outlook and OneDrive. The Single Sign On feature means there's no switching in and out of programs—each user's credentials retain the same encryption, no matter what computer is being used. This allows your business to offer shareable links, public-facing access, and large file transfers to customers or clients who aren't in your organization.

Built-In Collaboration

Collaboration is an increasingly important capability for small and growing companies. Employees need to be able to access the documents, images, and assets as conveniently and as quickly as possible. And when some workers are remote and some are on-site, having a single location in which these employees can interact is vital.

Office 365 makes it easy to share files securely with co-workers, customers, and partners through simple calendar and document sharing on OneDrive.

The following features allow your employees to work together on documents that are always current and accessible from virtually anywhere:

- Host live meetings through Office 365's Live Meeting feature.
- Create and manage internal team websites and portals to collaborate on individual and group projects.
- Build and route date- and requirement-based workflows with SharePoint.
- View, edit, and synchronize Word, Excel, and PowerPoint files on mobile devices.

Each feature is integrated into the Outlook dashboard so that you can access every file, application, and email from one convenient location.

Synchronized Email Solutions

Email is no longer a desktop activity. It is accessed on computers all over the world, on mobile phones, and on tablets. And to maintain ease of use and the highest capability, it needs to maintain 100 percent functionality on each device.

Business-class email and shared calendars allow your employees to stay in sync and on schedule.

With Office 365, email is synchronized all of the time no matter where you are. Business-class email and shared calendars allow your employees to stay in sync and on schedule. Emails also retain encryption through sender and recipient, automatic 7-year archiving, and spam filtering. As an added benefit, Office 365 users receive email addresses unique to their domain name so that your email address is as professional as your products and services.





Integrated And Improved Security

An underlying theme of every function above is the markedly increased security you enjoy from Office 365. Since the data is backed up to a number of data centers, your data will never be gone. Instead of worrying about the physical damage that can occur to your server such as fire, theft, and flood, your information is secure and backed up in multiple locations. You can restore your network at a moment's notice without uploading and downloading software.

Office 365 also meets other unique security requirements that you won't have to have on your to-do list anymore:

- Each company receives a HIPAA-compliant Business Associate Agreement (BAA).
- An enhanced spam filter provides notably less spam, leading to fewer vulnerabilities and phishing attacks.
- Your data is automatically scanned with antivirus software, removing threats before they get close to your computer.

**Read and watch more
about Office 365 security
features at the Office
365 Trust Center.**

Office 365 also allows you to close and disable accounts remotely in the event of a lost or stolen laptop or terminated employee. You can remove anything that an intruder has done remotely and prevent them from having an impact on your business.

Planning Your Transition Into The Cloud

If it's clear that transitioning your business into the cloud will streamline your workflows, increase productivity, and lower costs, then you're ready to plan your transition. Start by consulting with an Office 365 expert to determine which features are important to your business right now and which features will be important as your business grows. How easily you can identify and apply these changes will depend on the size of your business and your current network arrangement.

Most businesses can transition their network to the cloud in three steps: updating your domain name; migrating your data; and setting up equipment and training your employees to use their mobile, tablet, and desktop devices with Office 365.

To make the transition as quick and seamless as possible, facilitate each stage of this transition with a trained professional. Working with an Office 365 expert means that you won't experience any downtime, miss a single email, or lose functionality. The transition will take place behind the scenes while your team is up and running.

If you're looking to increase efficiency, lower costs, and prepare your business for future growth, cloud-based office applications might be the right step for you. To learn more about Office 365 and how it can help you, contact us for a free consultation.

About Infinity Technologies

At Infinity Technologies, we understand how critical it is for our clients to protect their data and the devices that form the backbone of their business operations. Because of this, we work closely with several kinds of organizations to make sure that they have the systems in place to prevent these kinds of security threats from ever becoming a problem. Our team of technical experts also work with our clients proactively to assess and prevent security threats on an ongoing basis.

If you are looking to ensure that your company is safe from viruses, ransomware, phishing emails, or other dangerous threats that can bring your operation to a grinding halt, get in touch with us to see how we can help you meet your IT security needs and keep your office network running the way that it needs to.

Contact Us For a Free Consultation

