Office 365

A Beginners' Guide to Office 365   Migration

Planning a move to Office 365? Start with a good plan. There are a lot of things to think about and no matter which migration method you choose, you have to be ready for a few bumps along the way.

Things can go south pretty quickly. Corrupted mailboxes and lost connectivity are only a few of the problems you might face. You've got a business to run. You don't have time to worry about migration issues. That's why we believe your migration should always be handled by experts. SherWeb has a lot of experience helping small- and medium-sized businesses migrate their data to Office 365. We've put together this simple guide that will help you plan your migration and increase your chances for a smooth ride.

How the Migration Works

SOMPISI
IT SOLUTIONS

Interested? Contact us now! 021-204-7060

1 First Things First: Start with a Plan

As with any project, a good plan is essential to ensure the success of an Office 365 migration. While it is true that even the best plans rarely survive the project unchanged, it is still vital for a service provider to present a comprehensive plan to a customer at the outset of the project. Even if the plan does change, it will still serve as a guideline.

Here are some of the key elements for every Office 365 migration:

- Map users and devices. Essentially, this means taking an inventory of the types of devices present in your infrastructure and deciding which devices (and therefore users) will have Office 365 access. Devices include PCs, Macs, servers, tablets and phones.

- Identify customizations and data that might not be suitable for migration. This step can identify and help clear potential roadblocks. Therefore, clarify what is moving to the cloud and what is not.

- Create a migration schedule. Start with a test migration of just a few users and then build a schedule for the complete migration. Remember to stay flexible to deal with obstacles identified in the test.

- Select the migration type that is best suited for your business. Basic migration types include hybrid, cutover, staged and third party. We'll provide more information on migration types later in this guide.

- Tell your team about the migration process and select team members who are willing to be part of your first test.

2 Get a Grip on Identity and Authentication

At the outset of a migration project, one of the most important and challenging aspects is dealing with identity and authentication. Many organizations have trouble moving to Office 365 because of identity and management access issues. A service provider can host Active Directory for you, or you can use Azure Active Directory as the source of authority for Office 365 accounts. There are two main components

SOMPISI
IT SOLUTIONS

Interested? Contact us now! 021-204-7060

worth considering for identity and authentication management: Azure AD Connect (AAD Connect) and Active Directory Federation Services.

- AAD Connect is a purpose-built version of Microsoft Information Manager designed to synchronize user accounts from an on-premises Active Directory into Office 365. AAD Connect allows clients to use their on-premises Active Directory account to access Office 365.

  In addition to syncing users' accounts into Office 365, AAD Connect can also sync users' passwords. This feature allows users to have a "single sign-on" experience when they login to Office 365 with the same username and password that they use to login to their computers at work. More advanced features of AAD Connect include:

  ⊘ Password write-back

  ⊘
  ⊘ Group write-back

  ⊘ Support for connecting multiple AD forests to a single Office 365 tenant Attribute filtering

- AD Federation Services is a Windows Server component that allows Office 365 users to authenticate against their own on-premises Active Directory. With ADFS, resellers can retain more control over the authentication process, as ADFS uses the customer's own AD for authentication of Office 365 accounts. However, this greater control means keeping these ADFS servers online for users to login to Office 365.

  Since activating ADFS means you rely on those servers for authentication into Office 365, you should deploy multiple ADFS servers for high availability. If deploying four servers (two ADFS servers and two Windows Application Proxy servers, both sets with a load balancer) is more than the service provider wants to maintain, hosting ADFS servers in the cloud is also an option.

③ Choose the Right Migration Method

As we said earlier, it's important to select the migration type that is best suited to your organization. Most data from a hosted email platform will be transferred with a cutover migration. This involves provisioning your Office 365 tenant and user accounts and then copying your data into Exchange Online before "cutting over" messaging services to Office 365. It is also important to pay attention to the types of data that can be migrated from the original source into Office 365. The tools used for data migration may not allow the provider to move calendar and contact items. In addition, some source messaging platforms, like Lotus Notes, include data types that do not map into Exchange Online.

After considering all the other factors, the service provider must make a decision about the migration method necessary to get existing data into Office 365. There are

SOMPISI
IT SOLUTIONS

considerable differences among the features, functionality, and impact of various migration methods.

Here are the most commonly used migration methods:

• Cutover

• Hybrid

• Staged

• Third party

3.1 Cutover migration

This is considered the easiest of all the migration methods. It's also the migration of choice for many small business owners. All mailboxes, users, contacts and mail groups are transferred to Office 365 in one shot. It's the easiest way to get a company's existing email into Office 365 and it's very useful for organizations that plan to move their entire email organization and manage their user accounts there. On the downside, cutover migrations can only handle up to 1,000 mailboxes and may take several days to complete, depending on the total number of users, contacts and mail volume the company wants to transfer. Some small businesses may prefer to do the migration in stages rather than waiting for a total transfer to be completed.

3.2 Hybrid migration

Contrary to the cutover migration, the hybrid model is a lot more complicated. Doing a hybrid migration involves moving some on-premises capabilities to Office 365 and leaving others to be managed in-house. The difficulty comes in deciding what should be transferred. For example, you may decide it's just not worth the effort to migrate SharePoint servers that host older content to Office 365. This data can remain on-premises along with email archiving. Planning for this kind of migration is a strategic challenge because there are a number of platforms and systems involved in the transition. Despite the difficulty involved, hybrid migrations can handle more than 2,000 mailboxes, which could be more suitable for larger businesses.

3.3 Staged migration

If your business doesn't want to migrate all its resources at once, you might opt for a staged migration. In this case, the mailboxes are transferred to Office 365 in smaller batches over several hours or even days. Once again, the migration time depends on the number of mailboxes and the volume of content to be transferred. Just like the cutover migration, a staged migration is limited to less than 1,000 mailboxes. There is little disruption for users because no email is being received at the older Exchange email server. In some cases, users may be required to restart Outlook and change their passwords when the migration is finished. Staged migrations work best with newer versions of Exchange email servers. If your business has a later version of the Exchange server, such as 2003 or 2007, you might consider a cutover or hybrid migration.

3.4 Third-party migrations

This refers to using a packaged set of tools from a vendor for the move to Office 365. Many Microsoft partners have developed tools to assist with migration into Office 365. Some service providers might have them as well, but others might want to look into third-party packages. Each of these partners has included different features and limitations for these solutions.

Ready to move to Office 365?

Our highly skilled support team will take you there.

Book a call with one of our advisors and get started.

021-204-7060