

Cloud Smoothie - 10 reasons why blended cloud is best for Office 365



Combining Office 365
with Mimecast

Opinion Whitepaper

There's no doubting the revolutionary impact Office 365 is having on the office IT environment. For all but a few, Office 365 is a very real and highly valuable means of making a first step into cloud computing and harnessing all of the promise it has to offer. In fact, industry analyst, Gartner predicts that by 2020, 50% of the world's enterprises will have migrated to the platform.

For many, the chance to move enterprise email into the cloud is the most attractive opportunity of all. By far the most important business productivity tool, the average email system is an organisations biggest repository of critical data, actionable content and corporate knowledge. Without it, staff productivity is severely hampered, especially when an employee sends or receives an email every four minutes. As such, keeping on top of this system to maintain availability, deliver acceptable performance, store the vast volumes of data inside it and ensure emails are retrievable, can be an endless task of epic proportions and cost. IT teams are frequently driven to distraction with email and welcome the chance to outsource the headache to someone else.

However, for anyone who has migrated or is thinking of migrating to Office 365, there are some important considerations, easy to overlook when the chance of unburdening the IT team is so tantalising and the luxury of predictable recurring costs so inviting.

Email has always been a concentrated risk for any organisation, both in terms of availability and security. Those looking to inflict damage, see it as a primary attack vector and organisations will typically build high levels of disaster tolerance into their solution. Whilst email is managed on-premise, there is considerable scope to mitigate risk through replicated systems, multi-layer security and complementary third party services. Office 365 offers little possibility to adopt this same approach and whilst SLA's exist around the service, response to interruptions will no longer be in your hands. For organisations with a business critical dependency on email it's likely these SLA's will not be sufficient. Office 365 therefore becomes a very real single point of failure.

The cloud and Office 365 is awesome. No question. But, just like an on-premise system, you will experience service interruption - some planned, some unexpected. The question is, how will you cope when (not if) your Office 365 email service is unavailable?

Blended Cloud - two clouds are better than one

In our opinion, using Mimecast as a secondary cloud service is the answer. It seamlessly integrates with Office 365 and introduces new levels of resilience and a raft of complementary tools. If you're yet to migrate, Mimecast paves the way for a risk-free migration to the cloud or if you've already migrated, added peace of mind and the chance to make email an even more useful tool for your staff. Here's 10 reasons we think blended cloud is best.

What is Mimecast?

Mimecast makes using Office 365 safer by addressing three critical needs: security, archiving and continuity. It provides a single management platform designed for and delivered 100% in the cloud, with no infrastructure for staff to manage.

Working seamlessly with Office 365, this blended cloud approach recreates the protection and reliability of a multi-layered, on-premise, enterprise email system and ensures Office 365 does not become a single point of failure.



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1. 100% uptime SLA

Office 365 operates a 99.9% uptime SLA, which on the surface sounds a lot, but still equates to 43 minutes of downtime per month. Without email, staff are less productive and security risks are increased as people attempt work-a-rounds that potentially compromise business critical data or breach regulatory obligation. Whilst Microsoft offers a financially backed uptime service level, in the event of service interruption, this offers little comfort in the moment and post-event calculations to arrive at compensation are punitive and stacked in Microsoft's favour.

Using Mimecast alongside Office 365, a 100% uptime SLA is assured. Fail over into continuity mode can be instantly initiated in the event of an Office 365 interruption and whilst in continuity mode, users have access to a rolling 58-day email archive and continue to work with their email as per normal. So seamless is the experience, users will be unaware there has even been an interruption to the primary service.

2. Advanced threat protection

Relying solely on Office 365 anti-virus, anti-spam and email filtering for protection from advanced threats does carry some risk. The built-in protection included with Office 365 is limited. Conversely, Mimecast mitigates this risk through its Targeted Threat services; URL and Attachment Protect, which are more advanced and more cost effective than that offered by Office 365. This prevents users from clicking on malicious links in email or being affected by weaponised attacks.

This is hugely important when email is such an attractive attack vector for those seeking to inflict damage.

3. Unlimited archive

Email archives are a primary record of business communication and a highly valuable corporate information asset. Losing them is a huge risk. Whilst some Office 365 plans come with unlimited storage for archive, the default archive is set as 100GB. Mimecast however, offers a genuine always-on unlimited archive for email. Furthermore, the archive is an immutable, tamper-resistant archive, which means that all retained email data is encrypted and held in triplicate for added peace of mind.

4. Ultimate email track and trace

Searching emails to prove receipt or delivery can be really challenging in Office 365. Data is only available for 90 days, after which recovery can literally take hours. Conversely, Mimecast provides instantaneous search results and delivery and receipt data is stored for the life of the email. Archives are completely self-service too, so when users need to discover content they can do it independently without logging calls to the IT team.



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5. Permanent data retention

There are several ways to lose data in Office 365, some caused by users, others by administrators. For example, users can delete messages and after removing from deleted items, they are no longer recoverable. On the other hand, administrators can assign themselves or anyone else access to a mailbox and thereafter delete emails either by error or maliciously. With Mimecast, centrally managed policies keep mailboxes small and offload long-term email storage to the cloud, reducing the need to delete email. Archives are instantly accessible to employees on any device, anywhere, meaning data is always retained and always discoverable.

6. Zero cost archives

To retain data of terminated employees (inactive archives) a manual activation must occur and is only available on certain Office 365 plans. Mimecast retains inactive archives as standard and at no additional cost.

7. Flexible invocation

Users of Mimecast can choose to manually trigger failover mode to test the service at any time. Invocation can be activated from 24 hours to 7 days and can be activated for all users or just a subset of your choosing.

8. Enable a richer mobile experience

Thanks to Mimecast, users can also access their archive mailbox on a host of mobile devices, extending far beyond the limited support Microsoft offers on Office 365 today.

Enabling users to retrieve any email on quite literally any device, significantly enhances their experience, and improves productivity irrespective of where they are or the device to hand. Equally, emails can be retrieved from archives whether Office 365 is available or not.



9. Overcome message size limits

Emails sent through Office 365 are limited to 150MB. Whilst significantly larger than what is permitted through most on-premise email systems, many organisations will be set up to receive incoming attachments much smaller than this. Consider also that Microsoft includes a 25% overhead on these limits for transcoding, so in reality 150MB actually becomes 112.5mb. Equally, using Outlook Web Access individual attachments are limited to 25MB. Instead, Mimecast enables files of up to 2GB to be shared, by removing them from the email itself. Mimecast also adds security to these larger files by adding an admin or user-selected secure access key option, which will even notify the sender of receipt and download. Importantly, this overcomes the issues of sending and receiving large files but also plays a welcomed role in reducing mailbox bloat, something large attachments are a major contributor to.

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10. Preserving data for litigation or compliance

Office 365 can immutably preserve mailbox content, to meet long-term preservation or eDiscovery requirements. This process is called 'Litigation Hold' and is a manual process, which essentially secures immutability in the event of active litigation or compliancy obligation. It is certainly not designed as a long-term archive and is still subject to the limitations of Office 365 archiving in that it only applies from the point activated - previously deleted data will not be recoverable. What's more, Litigation Hold is not available with every Office 365 plan. In comparison, Mimecast provides an on-going and permanent immutable archive from day one by default, with no need to manually activate it. This ensures email is set up for eDiscovery and data retention from the beginning.

Summary

Without question, Office 365 will provide an acceptable level of availability, security and functionality for many organisations. However, for others who are considering a move to the cloud more carefully, some of the limitations of Office 365 outlined in this paper may be the deciding factors in remaining wedded to on-premise enterprise email solutions. It is for these organisations in particular, that we think Mimecast could be the deciding factor in adopting Office 365 and therefore benefiting from all of the capability, innovation and cost saving potential it represents.

Likewise, organisations who have already made the move must not forget Mimecast can still be implemented post-Office 365 migration and in our view stand to gain just as much.

What next?

See it in action

Join us for a demonstration of Mimecast where we will showcase everything it has to offer around email security, continuity and archiving as well as many of the advanced features that enhance user experience.

To arrange your demo email

hello@servium.com or call

0303 334 33 44



About Mimecast

Mimecast makes business email and data safer for more than 14,500 customers and millions of employees worldwide. Founded in 2003, the company's next-generation cloud-based security, archiving and continuity services protect email, and deliver comprehensive email risk management in a single, fully-integrated subscription service. Mimecast reduces email risk and the complexity and cost of managing the array of point solutions traditionally used to protect email and its data. For customers that have migrated to cloud services like Microsoft Office 365, Mimecast mitigates single vendor exposure by strengthening security coverage, combating downtime and improving archiving.

Mimecast Email Security protects against malware, spam, advanced phishing and other emerging attacks, while preventing data leaks. Mimecast Mailbox Continuity enables employees to continue using email during planned and unplanned outages. Mimecast Enterprise Information Archiving unifies email, file and instant messaging data to support e-discovery and give employees fast access to their personal archive via PC, Mac and mobile apps.

About Servium

Servium provides IT infrastructure services for medium to large enterprises in both the private and public sector. We pride ourselves on delivering innovative solutions inspired by overcoming the day-to-day and strategic IT challenges of our customers. This is achieved by blending the best emerging technologies with professional customer service to answer these challenges and deliver economies not previously possible.

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