# Osterman Research
## WHITE PAPER

# Using Third-Party Solutions With Office 365

# Executive Summary

Office 365 is licensed for use by more than 180 million users at more than 1.4 million commercial, education and government organizations, making it currently the most popular enterprise cloud service in the world. It covers a variety of situations, scenarios, and capability sets. Microsoft has won massive market momentum by bundling office productivity software and cloud-based services in Office 365 and Microsoft 365, much like it did with its original bundling of Word, PowerPoint and Excel back in the 1990s to create Microsoft Office. This paper discusses aspects of the email messaging and collaboration services that are nearly synonymous with Office 365.

While Microsoft offers an industry-leading communications, collaboration and productivity platform, organizations need to understand their real requirements and most would be well-served by reinforcing the service in several key, supplemental areas, most especially security, archiving, eDiscovery, and encryption. Decision makers need to be aware that relying exclusively on the native capabilities in Office 365 can present challenges and business risks for their organization. While the inclusion of similar capabilities in the platform may give some the impression of platform self-sufficiency, organizations should recognize that certain features may not best align with their business needs, now or in the future. In specific areas, it's important to recognize that a focused third-party vendor with deep industry and solution experience is often able to deliver deeper and better capabilities compared to Microsoft, thereby complementing Office 365 and reducing the business risk of embracing all Office 365 features as sufficient or even ideal.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

As with any application, decision makers should perform due diligence on how Office 365 will perform for their organization. This includes:

- Understanding the capabilities on offer in Office 365, and how those capabilities match the organization's security requirements, compliance mandates, and legal processes.

- Undertaking a deep dive on Office 365's features and functions, in order to understand what is and isn't available in Office 365, and how what's available in Office 365 compares to capabilities on offer in third-party solutions that may better address your business needs. Insufficient security and compliance capabilities can result in high threat business events, e.g., data breaches, business email compromise, GDPR fines, ransomware infections, phishing attacks leading to credential theft, theft of intellectual property, and other problems.

- Developing a risk matrix of the security threats and compliance mandates facing your organisation, and deciding which risks you are willing to address with standard capabilities in Office 365, along with defining the financial provision that will have to be made if an adverse event occurs. For various other risks, being proactive in establishing more effective safeguards by adding third-party solutions to mitigate the risk will be the better path.

- Planning how to address any identified supplemental needs for Office 365 ideally before rolling out the platform. For organizations where these capabilities are essential, important, frequently used, and necessary to everyday workflow, relying on "good enough" tools is not good enough. Lack of capability starts to have a business net-negative impact. And equally, for organizations where these capabilities are infrequently used, actually having best-of-breed solution sets available is much more important than only "good enough" functionality sets.

> *Decision makers must perform due diligence on how Office 365 will perform for their organization.*

## ABOUT THIS WHITE PAPER

Osterman Research conducted an in-depth survey of organizations that are or will be using Office 365, and combined insights from this survey with its own analysis and evaluation of Office 365. Osterman Research provides regular analysis of Office 365 through its Office 365 Analysis Service, available by subscription. This white paper was sponsored by Proofpoint; information about the company is provided at the end of this paper.