# Microsoft Center of Excellence
# NEWSLETTER

Microsoft

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## BEYOND E5: DEALING WITH THE BRAVE NEW WORLD

**Microsoft**

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# From the Experts: Pre-blog Articles

## Beyond E5: Dealing with the Brave New World
By Lane Shelton

When I look across Microsoft's technology and licensing landscape, it's amazing to me how much everything has changed since even a couple of years ago. Back then Office 365 was new and everyone was talking about email in the cloud. Now I routinely have conversations about extensible identity, multi-layered security, hybrid intranets and machines that watch other machines and get smarter as they go. It's an exciting, but somewhat uncertain time. For their part, Microsoft has meshed almost all of their technologies together into a single, cohesive ecosystem that applies to almost every facet of the modern compute environment. For example, it's not SCCM for patching anymore—now it's SCCM + Intune + Endpoint protection + OMS + Azure AD and RMS Premium = a single pane of glass solution for managing everything from a VM host to a mobile phone and keeping all of it secure. I know it doesn't completely work like that…yet. But this is Microsoft—I've been doing this 20 years and one thing I've learned is that Microsoft puts it out there, warts and all, and they improve it over time. And the speed at which they've been knitting all these things together is impressive.

Which leads me to the central question that everyone I work with is asking—how much of that new ecosystem will I use, and how much is it going to cost both now and over the long haul to get there. After all, not only has the technology stack radically changed, so has the licensing stack. Remember the old-school perpetual Enterprise Agreement, where you figured out everything you were going to do over the next three years, bundled it up, divided by three and that was your annual payment? If you didn't use everything you paid for, you still owned the licenses and you'd get there eventually. Those days are almost gone—now there are subscriptions and new bundles, and if you don't use what you pay for, you lose it. Along with all the new technology innovations comes a certain amount of new investment risk.

But before we talk about how to deal with the financial risk of the brave new world, let's talk about another important thing I've observed along the way. When I do a security assessment, almost every time I discover that a given security ecosystem is comprised of multiple best-of-breed solutions. This in itself is not a bad thing, who doesn't want best of breed? However, when you add it all up and look at it as a single ecosystem, it looks (and in some ways functions) like a junkyard. Solution #1 for encryption, solution #2 for IPS, solution #27 for data integrity—and very little of it integrates with everything else. I've seen environments where the security ecosystem's effectiveness is degraded to an alarming degree by too many best-of-breed solutions that don't work together.

Now apply that to overall "cloud-aware ecosystem" that everyone is either building, built or planning to build. The cloud-aware ecosystem is what we build to deliver a well-executed and managed end-user experience, and it incorporates elements of cloud (as everything seems to these days). You need something for identity, logistics, security, management, and then there are the applications themselves. That's the single ecosystem Microsoft is building—it encompasses everything from the moment an end-user turns on their computer and authenticates, to what data and applications they use, the devices they use, how they collaborate and communicate—and wraps it all in a security blanket backed by machines watching your machines and getting smarter over time in helping you keep the environment tight. That's the vision anyway—and Microsoft bundles it all into various licensing suites to pay for it. I call it the "best of suite" approach.

What Microsoft is offering is a single stack to do everything—it won't do everything exactly the way you want it to. You generally need best-of-breed for that. But if you go best-of-breed for everything, down the line you may end up with a junkyard ecosystem. Best-of-suite takes the approach that having all the parts working together is better than having a bunch of working parts. And so we come back to the big question: how much of that ecosystem will you adopt? All of it? Some of it? None of it? Those questions matter especially when you are coming up on a renewal or have to make an investment decision because you're upgrading or planning for vNext. There is a bewildering array of choices too— Office 365 E Plans, K Plans, Enterprise Mobility Suite, Enterprise Cloud Suite, and probably some brand new plans coming that you haven't heard of yet. The good news is that there are fifty ways to get where you need to go, the bad news is that there are fifty ways to get where you need to go. Every customer is unique, but there are three guiding principles I've discovered that transcend the individual situation:

1. Pay for what you use: We are living in a subscription world. Subscriptions are flexible, but they are also a rental model. There's no need to pre-invest in something if you're not sure that you're going to use it. Just pay for what you need right now, and if you want something new later, add it. I know that's an over-simplification because this is licensing we're talking about, but I over-simplified it on purpose. When the bundles start coming at you and everything gets confusing, go back to the over-simplification. Do I need it right now? If I don't, how do I get it later when I do need it? Keep it simple on principle—pay for what you use.

2. Have a firm deployment plan for that which you plan to use: We've been doing this long enough that I've seen cases where the investment strategy was based on the idea that they'd be deploying these technologies over time, only when we got to renewal there still wasn't much usage. It wasn't because they didn't want to use what they paid for, it's just that time and circumstance got in the way. Most investment strategies have at least some element of future-need in them. But in the subscription model if you don't use it, you lose it. So make sure you have a firm deployment plan in place if you're paying for something you plan to use.

3. Get your grant proposal in order: If this is your first foray into the ecosystem, publishers often have programs that provide assistance for taking the first steps. They vary in size and shape, and are often tied to specific outcomes that may or may not apply in your particular case. But be sure to ask the question: is there any help available? Not one single time has a customer said to me: "Wow—moving X to the cloud was so much easier than I thought it would be!" It's challenging, and if there's assistance available—take it. Just don't forget to ask!

Drop us a line to know more about this.

# Office 365 Transition Potholes and How to Avoid Them
By Patrick Renzi

It's a question I get asked just about every time I speak to something regarding Office 365. What should I be asking? What should I look out for? What is going to happen that I am not expecting? Well that's the thing, not knowing what to expect makes it awfully hard to plan what to do when it happens. But what if you had a magic 8-ball? Something that could warn you of what might happen, before it does. Well, sadly such a device doesn't exist. But where there is no Magic, there is PC Connection, Inc., armed with the experts to help be that Magic 8 Ball. Let's start with somethings that may not be completely "advertised".

Office 365 Office Apps use a new Microsoft office package deployment method known as Click-2-Run. Click-2-Run software installs are revolutionary in the way that they are not quite so static. Traditionally, deployed media from Volume Licensing ran as a onetime install. Ever want to load a new Cumulative update, Service pack or edition? This required what was essentially a re-install, no "in-place" upgrade. Click-2-Run changes this, offering you the ability to "stream" office effectively and consistently to your users. No downtime required or updates needed. Now this probably sounds like a god send for a busy IT person, and that's probably because it is. New features and updates are streamed to users without the need to run new installs, without the need to interrupt a user's day to day life. However (as could be assumed considering the title and purpose of this post) there is a catch, a fairly significant one as well. With transitioning into Click-2-Run, Microsoft enabled what I like to call an "error by design". When deploying any Click-2-Run installs of office through Office 365 that are of versions 2013 or 2016 (I.E. the 2 versions available to an Office 365 user) any prior, Volume license or perpetual, Install of an Office Application (Project and Visio are included) will need to be removed from the system. No Coexistence is allowed.

Now let's move onto email, probably the single most popular platform/service hosted through Office 365. One of the main reasons organizations embrace it at the level that they do is because of the redundancy and access afforded them. Cloud email means users can access email on their system regardless of the state of the local domain. And this is absolutely true (!), but once again, there is a catch. Deploying Exchange Online often comes hand in hand with Domain Federation, Pass through authentication enabling what is in all essence Single Sign On. With a workload as important as Email, the last thing you want is a major change to a user's day to day life, something that might have far reaching consequences (depending on who that user is). That's why organizations create and enable this Federation Services role. Giving users that single sign on experience that makes their consumption of email that much easier. There is no veiled sarcasm here, this is huge for the majority of the workforce, and so if you knew there was a way to ensure you had it available wouldn't you take it? Well, there is obviously once again, a catch. Enabling Active Directory Federation Services means that for any access to exchange online through outlook (even though it is still cloud Email) requires an authentication attempt to be sent through your on premise AD Domain Controller. What this means to you is, lose access to the local Domain controller and you lose access to your email through outlook. Now users can still use the Outlook web app with access to the internet but any locally saved .pst files become unusable. Not even considering whether you've trained your end users on the use of the Outlook Web App.

Now I'm not trying to scare you off Office 365. Quite the contrary, I want to quell any uncertainty this new technology may cause. Going to the cloud for tiresome workloads like exchange shouldn't be something you have to worry about. It should be celebrated, removing this workload from your system and no longer needing to manage the troublesome storage that comes along with it. But not knowing what to expect can keep you from truly embracing the new technology ahead of us. So for any other questions, please, give your account manager a call and ask to speak to a specialist about Office 365, about Azure, even another cloud provider.

Drop us a line to know more about this.

# Moving to the Cloud? The Platform You Might Not Have Considered
By Patrick Renzi

If you looked out of the window today, you'd probably see a large assortment of clouds. Clouds of all different types, shapes, and sizes. There'd be Cirrus Clouds, Cumulus Clouds, Public Clouds, Hybrid Clouds; but do you see your cloud? Is it light, fast moving, and flexible? Is it dark, erratic and unpredictable? Chances are you don't know yet, and there is nothing wrong with this sentiment. You manage IT in a very real business, with very real concerns. But with the proper plan in place you can ensure that utilizing the hyper scalability, flexibility and efficiency of Microsoft's Cloud Platform will be as smooth a transition as it can be.

The first question you need to ask yourself is what level of adoption is right for your business to start? Most companies like to start by hypothetically "dipping their toes in the pool" and this is for good reason. Mission critical applications and process' are as the name implies too important to fail. Failure of these applications would result in huge losses to your business. That's why I feel it best to start small, and work up from there. Microsoft's Office 365 and Azure clouds offer packaged Software as a Service (SaaS) and Platform as a Service (PaaS) options that are flexible and scalable with low entry costs and little management/configuration overhead required. SaaS and PaaS services can be enabled as soon as they are needed and are available to be consumed shortly after.
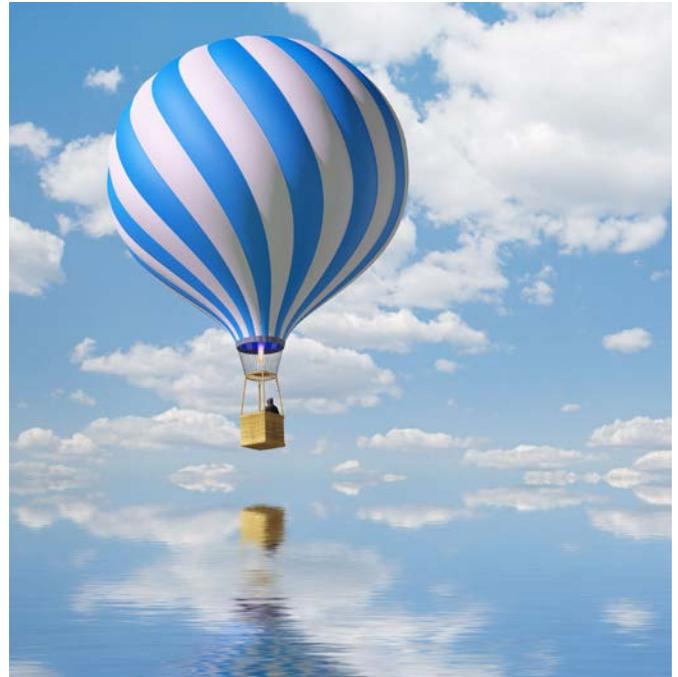
 Looking for built in redundancy to a SQL Database but don't have a secondary offices or access to a COLO? Azure SQLDB services offer low cost scalable databases that grow right alongside your business. Flexibility and Scalability are the terms to consider here. This service is often an afterthought for business' looking to protect their SQL databases however, many opting for more complete, costly and bandwidth intensive SQL Image VMs running in the public cloud. Have users starting Monday but don't have the time to configure, image and deploy new devices? Enable Azures Remote App services to build, configure and deploy full windows environments for users to consume within minutes. Empowering users to do meaningful work from day one, no weekend overtime required.

Azure Platform services can be the springboard into your cloud adoption because there is very little overhead required regarding price or man time. Pre-built systems, with pre-configured connects ready to break your pre-conceived notions regarding the Azure cloud. Take a few minutes to look through the whole host of services Azure offers and make the decision that's best for your business. There really is something for everyone!

Drop us a line to know more about this.

# Flash Traffic: Important Microsoft News

**Microsoft**

## Microsoft Puts More Time on Our Side

Microsoft's previous announcement indicated that they would effectively pull the plug on Windows 7 and 8/8.1 support for 6th Gen and higher processors after July 2017. Our commitment has been ongoing, and we have been busy talking to customers and gathering feedback for Microsoft. We found that many of our customers felt this change had a negative impact and put a severe crimp in already strained IT budgets and plans. It appears Microsoft has heard the feedback and announced the cutoff date has been extended to July 17, 2018. More time seems a better proposition for everyone on many fronts. We get two years instead of one to not only understand the cutoff ramifications, but to plan for the impact as well. So why not just let Windows 7 and 8/8.1 go until their natural end of life? Here's why:

1.  Microsoft is also allowing ALL critical security updates to go through the natural end of life for Windows 7 (2020) and Windows 8 (2023). Therefore, if you can't meet the 2018 cutoff, you will still get critical security updates for Windows 7 and 8/8.1. But please beware: that's not the same as "support". You still need to carefully think about that deadline and how you will operate older operating systems on "new silicon".

2.  Pushing this out another year gives customers and Microsoft more time to watch how Windows 10 evolves. This is likely a welcome relief for customers. For example, in nearly 100 Windows 10 conversations with customers of every shape and size since the first announcement, we have found a consistent theme: virtually all of them are working on their Windows 10 strategies, all in various stages. Windows 10 is Windows as a Service and therefore requires careful planning and quite a bit of new thinking. Pushing the date out means more production environments will be live, more case study availability, and the ability for best practices to emerge. We applaud this delay and the continuation of critical security fixes until natural OS end of life. The OS is too important, and now we all have more time to solve for the best Windows 10 experience and deliver that to our end users.

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# Trending Blog Articles

**Microsoft**

## Free SQL Server 2016 Licenses!
by Jared Bisbano

As part of the SQL Server 2016 launch event, Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella announced a commercial database promotion that provides customers with free licenses if you are running a competitor's platform (Oracle, Sybase, SAP Hana). The offer ends on June 30, 2016; however, free is never free.
[Read More]

## Roaming Rights, Windows VDA, and You
by Melissa Curtis

For years now, Microsoft has offered virtual desktop access (VDA) through Software Assurance. Soon, this feature will no longer be available.
[Read More]

## Unite Your Organization with EUC
by Tony Dancona

Today I want to talk to you about your user base. You know, your employees, coworkers, bosses—basically everyone who sits in front of a keyboard at your business. Without them, not a lot would get done. After all, those reports aren't going to type themselves!
[Read More]

## Microsoft Software A Time to Deploy and a Time to Migrate
by Jeff Stork

Make sure strategy—not panic—is driving your migration. There is no better time to upgrade your Microsoft environment than today. The decision is easy, but executing can be a challenge.  By keeping business strategy at the top of your objectives, you can assure best chance of best outcomes.
[Read More]

## Breaking News: Important Microsoft Windows 10 and 6th Gen Support Extension
by Jeff Stork

Make sure strategy—not panic—is driving your migration. There is no better time to upgrade your Microsoft environment than today. The decision is easy, but executing can be a challenge.  By keeping business strategy at the top of your objectives, you can assure best chance of best outcomes.
[Read More]

## Life After "SQL-mageddon"
by Lane Shelton

With the official end of life looming (RIP, April 12, 2016) for the up to 2 million-plus servers running some form of Microsoft's popular relational database management system, SQL Server 2005, putting in place a migration plan is not optional—it's a must.

[Read More]

# This Month's Authors

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# Product-Related News

**Microsoft**

## 25% Off on Visual Studio Professional MSDN-Enterprise MSDN Step-up
Between May 1, 2016 and June 30, 2016, Microsoft will offer a 25% off SASU (Pro-Enterprise step-up and Test Pro-Enterprise step-up). This offer will apply to new agreements, renewal agreement SA retentions, Renewal agreement add-ons, and mid agreement add-ons.

## Save 25% to 45% on Azure-Related VM Fees with Windows Server SA
As of February 2016 Customers can leverage Windows Server 2012 R2 server licenses with active SA to get preferential pricing for Azure Hosted VM workloads (running any version Of Windows Sever supported by Azure). The preferential pricing means a customer will be billed at the Linux VM (compute only rate) listed in their volume licensing contract price sheet rather than at the higher Windows Server VM rate. This can result in approximately 25% to 45% savings.

## Save Up to $150 with the Surface Pro 4 Productivity Bundle
From May 1–June 30, 2016, you can save up to $150 when you bundle a qualifying Surface Pro 4 and black Type Cover.

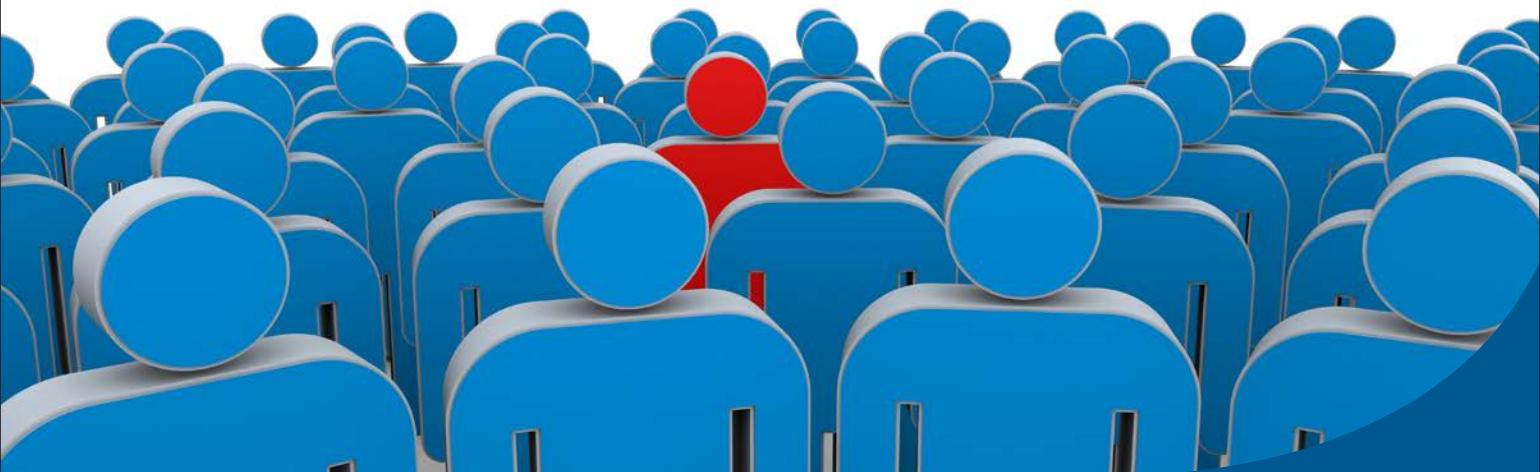## We Have Included the Microsoft Band to Our Device-Arsenal
Help your employees to be a part of the wearables-health movement by buying them a Microsoft Band. Microsoft Band is a wrist wearable that can easily make business processes more efficient and help employees be healthier. It provides more sensors than any other wrist wearable while still maintaining a sleek, modern, and comfortable design.

## EDU Bundle Promotion Will Expire on May 6, as Surface 3 Device Is Constrained through End of 2016
Microsoft has communicated that the Surface 3 device will be constrained through the end of 2016. In regard to the device constraint and the increased demand, Microsoft has adjusted the promotion dates for the Surface 3 Promotion bundle for 30% off, the bundle will now expire on May 6, 2016. Microsoft has assured that any purchase order placed for EDU Bundles through May 6 will be fulfilled through July 2016. Any other orders for Surface 3 will be fulfilled over the balance of the 2016 calendar year, as Microsoft works through the constraints.

## Restatements and Corrections
An error was made when the Project and Visio Cloud Add-On promotion was launched. On March 1, 2016, a 30% discount was quoted instead of a 20% on Project and Visio Cloud Add-On promotion. The incorrect promotion ended on March 31, 2016, and a new promotion with the correct discount has been created for start date April 1, 2016, with an end date of June 30, 2016.

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