Microsoft Center of Excellence
NEWSLETTER

Now Stronger than Ever
Softmart Joining the PC Connection, Inc. Family Means More Power for Every Customer

Microsoft

Microsoft

Contents

Softmart Now Stronger than Ever
More Power in Our Microsoft Center of Excellence, Means More Power for Every Customer

Microsoft

WRITTEN BY LANE SHELTON

PC Connection, Inc. recently invited Softmart to join our family of companies. Softmart is a powerful company in its own right, recently described by CRN as a "solution provider stalwart with well-defined hardware, cloud, and Office 365 practices." Combined with the depth and breadth of PC Connection, Inc.'s strength and reach, ranked #20 in CRN's 2015 Solution Provider 500, our aim is to offer our customers everything they need to build sound technology investments, achieve their technology goals from the end-user experience to the data center to the cloud, and, of course, to save time and money while doing it. Together, we are PC Connection, Inc.'s Microsoft Center of Excellence, and we are over 100 people dedicated to your success in all things Microsoft. As PC Connection, Inc., we are 2,400 people dedicated to your success in all things IT.

Specifically, here's what you get when you partner with us:

Combined experience of over 70 years:
We've been helping customers achieve their Microsoft goals for a long time. The average tenure in our COE is 10 years, and some of us have been doing this for 20 years. We remember when there was no such thing as an Enterprise Agreement and we've been there with our customers through the rise of the Internet, the explosion of e-commerce, globalization, and now the cloud. Our customers adapt and evolve, and so do we.

Industry-recognized best practices in strategic decision support: Need help making the complex decisions required to align your technology investments with your specific needs and goals? When the dollars and complexity get high, we bring the best methodology, tools, and experts in the industry to help. Since 2007, our Microsoft Landscape Optimization service has helped thousands of customers make sound decisions, from small businesses to multi-national conglomerates to universities and government agencies.

Technical expertise and capabilities:
Together we have over 500 experts to help with everything from migrating workloads to the cloud to optimizing an on-premises data center, and everything in between. We offer everything from front-line support to fully managed services.

Operational Excellence: Strategic-level expertise means nothing if you can't support the day-to-day flow of the business just as effectively. PC Connection, Inc. and Softmart are proud of our combined 15 years of winning Microsoft's top-level Operational Excellence Award Our Concierge Services program ensures you get timely, relevant and proactive support as well—whether it's redeeming SA Benefits or preparing for a True-Up.

A dedicated support crew: Microsoft strategies and investments are complex, and

the rules are always changing. When you work with us, you work with a team of dedicated individuals Strategic Consultants, Solution Specialists, Software Asset Management Experts, Licensing Concierges, all working with your dedicated Account Manager to ensure you are surrounded by experts to help with every aspect of your investment.

Actionable Intelligence: In the ever-changing world of Microsoft, the right information can be the difference between success and failure. Our COE doesn't just keep you informed by reporting the news, we analyze the latest developments and transform news into actionable intelligence you can use to make informed decisions.

Everything Else: PC Connection, Inc. goes far beyond Microsoft. We represent over 1,600 technology partners, maintain a state-of-the-art configuration facility that processes over 200,000 custom configurations a year, and provide end-to-end services to support everything that we sell.

For the latest on all things Microsoft visit our newsletter library

SQL Server 2016

SQL Server 2016 is now available as of June 1, 2016. With this release, the SQL Server Business Intelligence, Parallel Data Warehouse, and Parallel Data Warehouse for Developers edition license offerings are being discontinued (see section 3 below for more details), but all Standard, Enterprise, and Web edition offerings remain as with the current SQL Server 2014 release. (Note that the SQL Server Developer Edition was previously discontinued, effective April 1, 2016.)

SQL Server Business Intelligence and Parallel Data Warehouse Editions Discontinued
Effective June 1, 2016, the following SQL Server product editions have been discontinued:

- **SQL Server Business Intelligence Edition**—Existing SQL Server 2014 Business Intelligence VL customers with active SA coverage, as well as ISVR customers with active Embedded Maintenance coverage, are eligible to upgrade to the SQL Server 2016 Enterprise Edition (Server/CAL) software.

- **SQL Server Parallel Data Warehouse (PDW) Edition and SQL Server Parallel Data Warehouse for Developers**—Since February 1, 2015, Microsoft Analytics Platform System (APS) appliance customers have been allowed to use SQL Server Enterprise Core Edition licenses with SA coverage as an option to licensing and running APS appliances. With the discontinuation of the standalone SQL Server PDW license offering on June 1, 2016, PDW customers with active SA coverage are eligible to upgrade to SQL Server 2016 Enterprise Core Edition software, and the SQL Server Enterprise Core Edition SA benefit becomes the primary license vehicle for PDW software.

- **Similarly, the standalone SQL Server PDW for Developers software licenses have also been discontinued. Customers licensing APS appliances for development and/or test usage can continue to cover the required PDW software licenses with applicable MSDN subscriptions that include access to SQL Server software.**
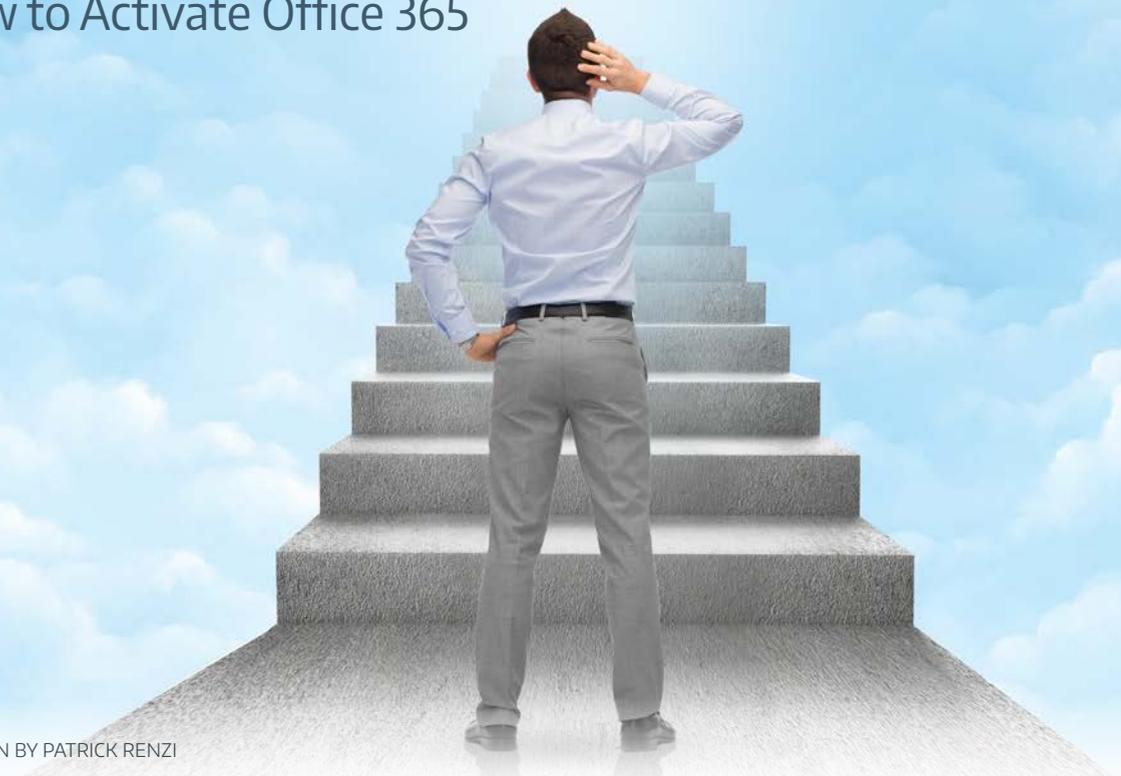
New Programmatic Price for Microsoft Dynamics CRM
Price decrease of 14.5% for Dynamics CRM Online Storage.

Microsoft

Stuck on Step Zero?

How to Activate Office 365

WRITTEN BY PATRICK RENZI

You've taken the plunge and decided to make the switch to Office 365. The first step was, naturally, completing the licensing purchase. Regardless of how you've made this purchase, there may be a few roadblocks sitting in your way. So let's hope the detour signs are there to help navigate you through. PC Connection is here on your journey to Office 365 to be that signage, brightly declaring to watch out, activation is just ahead! Let's start with the Enterprise Agreement, Microsoft's flagship agreement.

When purchasing your Office 365 through an Enterprise Agreement (EA), Microsoft will furnish what is known as a "welcome letter". This is sent to the end user at contract signing as the "subscription contact". When it's received, the viewer has two options: sign in or sign up. This is the first roadblock, and perhaps the most important. Office 365 and Microsoft's other SaaS offerings run off their Azure Active Directory service, using what is known as an organizational ID. Organizational IDs are sometimes referred to as "customer domains" or "Office 365 tenants" and can always be identified by the ".onmicrosoft. com" suffix that is assigned to each. Consider this the internal domain for your Office 365 service. If you've already established an Organizational ID, either through trialing

the Office 365 service or through another online service, such as the Forefront Online Protection for Exchange Package (FOPE), you may have settings and data that you want to carry over. If this is the case, you will want to choose "sign in" and activate the purchase on your Enterprise Agreement to this existing Organizational ID. If you want to start over, or perhaps this will be your first foray into Online Services, choose "sign up". This will let you create an Organizational ID from scratch for your organization to use. Be careful what you choose however, each enrollment can use just one Organizational ID.

When purchasing your Office 365 through the Microsoft Product and Services Agreement (MPSA), generally activation is a two-birds-with-one-stone scenario. And that's because unlike traditional volume licenses, which carry identities through Microsoft's antiquated "Live ID" system, the MPSA agreement is run off the Organizational ID. What that means is your Office 365 tenant is essentially chosen at activation of your MPSA agreement. Any licenses you add to that purchasing account will be automatically provisioned to the organizational ID the agreement is tied to. If this online service activation is your first purchase on the MPSA agreement, the same

suggestion as under the Enterprise Agreement carries over regarding "sign in" vs. "sign up".

Lastly is the Open Program, Microsoft's non-contractual and transactional agreement. When purchasing Office 365 through Open, there isn't an Organizational ID that the agreement is tied to. Instead, all purchases are activated individually. After a purchase is completed, you will access what is known as an Online Service Activation Key (OSA Key) from the VLSC. Choosing the "manage service activation" prompt given allows you to choose to "create an organizational account" or "I have an account to use". This is essentially a fancy way to say, "sign in" or "sign up". As mentioned under the EA and MPSA agreements, reasons to choose one vs. the other carry over.

If I've been successful in this blog post, you've been successful in moving past Step Zero and are finally onto Step One. Your journey into Microsoft's cloud is only just beginning, however. So allow PC Connection to remain at the ready (with plenty of informative road signs, of course) to help keep your journey on course.

Drop us a line to learn more about this.

Microsoft

It's Time to Upgrade to Surface

WRITTEN BY KAREN MORIARTY

The announcement of Surface Pro 4 and Surface Book last September was a game changer for Microsoft hardware. The release of these two devices impressed end users in the business world with Microsoft's leading technology in the field of mobile devices. These two business-ready devices have the latest Intel® Core™ processors for faster processing, enhanced pen capabilities, and Windows Hello. A more personal way to sign in, Windows Hello offers you a fast and accurate way to keep your device secure. Just show your face or touch your finger and be immediately recognized. And not only is Windows Hello more convenient than typing a password—it's much safer. Windows Hello offers enterprise-grade security that will meet the requirements of today's organizations— even those with some of the strictest requirements and regulations.

Microsoft Surface Pro 3 is in its final days of production and will be available throughout 2016, while supplies last. The devices in the final stage of production will come with Windows 10, but can be reverted to Windows 8 if necessary. It's important to note Surface Pro 4 and Surface Book both were released with Windows 10 and cannot be reverted back to Windows 8. Surface Pro 4 is the most productive way to get the versatility of a laptop and a tablet in one device. It is 30% faster than the Surface Pro 3, has a 5-million pixel resolution, and is super light at 786 grams—0.65 mm thinner than the Pro 3. Surface Book is the best way to experience all of the advanced technology from Microsoft. It provides 10 hours of battery life, a 6-million pixel resolution, and can run AutoCAD or Photoshop with a touch or pen.

The two newest additions to the Surface lineup are business ready while providing mobility and productivity on the go. Both devices deliver exceptional performance and are engineered to run Windows and Office seamlessly. The advanced technology and exclusive, world-class hardware design of Surface Pro 4 and Surface Book make everyday workflow a seamless, productive experience. Surface is now utilized in the top four verticals, including healthcare, retail, manufacturing, and financial services. Microsoft's Surface devices deliver the quality, productivity, power, and return on investment businesses are looking for. Make your upgrade today!

Drop us a line to learn more about this.

Office 365 Transition Potholes
by Patrick Renzi

It's a question I get asked just about every time I speak to someone regarding Office 365. What questions should I be asking about the transition? 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.
[Read More]

Cloud Storage and Disaster Recovery
by Kevin O'Connor

It may look like everyone is adopting cloud technology. However, IDG Research shows that over half of IT leaders (56%) say they are still identifying IT operations that are candidates for a move to the cloud. PC Connection, Inc. is seeing more movement to cloud storage and disaster recovery (DR), because they provide immediate benefits and relief to both the IT environment and staff. Check out some of these statistics.
[Read More]

Office 365 Licensing and You
by Dan Ortiz

Over the past year, Microsoft has been working with their customers to adopt the Office 365 brand. The first thing that customers contend with is determining whether or not the move makes sense—and which of the many plans available would provide the most value to their organization. This is no easy task, as there are multiple points of consideration that should not be overlooked.
[Read More]

Are You Worried about Cyber Security?
by Stacy Cote

I recently watched a Jimmy Kimmel skit regarding cyber security in which he sent a TV crew out on the streets to interview folks like you and me about their passwords. I admit, it was pretty funny, but I was also alarmed at how easily people were manipulated into telling a complete stranger their passwords.
[Read More]

Microsoft

Stacy Cote
Microsoft Partner Development Specialist
PC Connection, Inc.

Areas of expertise: Cloud, Servers, Microsoft, Software

See all articles by Stacy

Karen Lisa Moriarty
Product Manager for Microsoft Surface and OEM Devices
PC Connection, Inc.

Areas of expertise:Microsoft

See all articles by Karen

Kevin O'Connor
Senior Director Cloud Solutions Group
PC Connection, Inc.
Solutions and Services Division

Areas of expertise: Cloud, Software, Data Center

See all articles by Kevin

Dan Ortiz
Senior Licensing Solutions Specialist for Microsoft
PC Connection, Inc.

Areas of expertise: Licensing, Microsoft
See all articles by Dan

Patrick Renzi
Partner Development Specialist for Volume Licensing/Online Services
PC Connection, Inc.

Areas of expertise: Cloud Computing

See all articles by Patrick

Lane Shelton
Vice President of Software Business Development
PC Connection, Inc.

Areas of expertise: Cloud Computing, Hybrid Cloud, Licensing, Microsoft,Private Cloud, Public Cloud, Software, Windows Server 2003

See all articles by Lane

Microsoft

PC Connection, Inc.'s Microsoft Center of Excellence is dedicated to your success in all things Microsoft. As winner of 15 Operational Excellence Awards from Microsoft, our industry-leading team has the expertise and experience to help you make the most of your software investment.

PC Connection®
Small and Medium Business

MoreDirect®
A PC CONNECTION COMPANY
Enterprise IT

GovConnection®
A PC CONNECTION COMPANY
Government and Education IT

Softmart™
A PC CONNECTION COMPANY
Small and Medium Business, Government, and Education

Complete technology solutions and services
are available through the PC Connection, Inc. family of companies.