

Microsoft Center of Excellence

# NEWSLETTER

Issue #6, December 2016

## Wrapping Up the Year in Microsoft



# Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>3</b>
Wrapping Up in the Year in Microsoft	
<b>From the Experts</b> .....	<b>4</b>
 Windows 10 Keeps Getting Better .....	<b>4</b>
 Microsoft Teams Is Here.....	<b>5</b>
 Microsoft Dynamics 365 Takes Advantage of the Cloud.....	<b>7</b>
<b>Product-Related News</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>This Month's Authors</b> .....	<b>9</b>



# Wrapping Up the Year in Microsoft



As we wrap up the year here in Connection's Microsoft Center of Excellence (COE) it's a good time to pause and thank you for continuing to look to us to satisfy your Microsoft licensing and solution needs. We realize you have several choices when it comes to entrusting your purchase of software that drives your business. Thank you for choosing us.

2016 has brought many changes for Connection. In May we announced the acquisition of Softmart, a company rich with

experience selling and supporting Microsoft software solutions with talented salespeople and services resources. We infused more expertise and experience into our Licensing Solutions teams, Software Asset Management team, and added expanding capability to our Microsoft Landscape Optimization (MLO) team. Overall we grew our Microsoft Center of Excellence reach to over 100 people dedicated to supporting you. September brought about a new identity for us as we changed our brand across our companies to simply Connection.

It's the connection that each of us builds with you and each other to better serve you that is at the heart of what we do every single day.

Happy Holidays from each of us here in the COE. May 2017 bring your organization even greater success, and may we continue to earn your trust every day!

Dale Howard,  
Microsoft Center of Excellence Director



# Windows 10 Keeps Getting Better

## A Preview of the Windows 10 Creators Update Coming in Early 2017



WRITTEN BY ASHLEY LOFARO

It has been almost a year and a half since the release of Windows 10, and today it's running on more than 400 million devices worldwide. IT administrators are reporting an estimate of 15% improvement in OS management time to put toward other IT areas. Plus, security remediation has been greatly reduced, thanks to Windows 10 security features like Credential Guard and Device Guard, in conjunction with improved features like BitLocker.

No matter what the reason is today to move to Windows 10, there will be even more reasons in the future, because Windows 10 keeps getting better. With Windows as a Service, your organization will get constant security updates, new features about every six months, and the end of big OS upgrades.

On October 26, Microsoft unveiled a new feature update for early 2017, which will empower the creativity in all of us with new innovations to your Windows 10 PC, called the Creators Update.

How many times have you have tried to solve a problem by sketching it out? And how many times have you wished you had more than just two dimensions to properly communicate your solution? Well, Paint 3D, just introduced in the Creators Update, is just what you need. It provides an easy-to-use way to build 3D objects, create shapes, and then view them from every angle, adding details with tools like oil brushes and paint smudging. You'll even be able to add realistic textures, such as stained hardwood or soft grass, to your objects.

The Creators Update will also add additional features to Office apps on a Windows 10 PC. Ink Editor will make a tablet with a pen accessory the most convenient editing tool ever. Just strike through words to delete them, or circle them to highlight. Also tools like Digital Ruler are coming to PowerPoint, powered by Windows 10 technology that lets you use touch and a pen accessory at the same time, to be able to position the built-in software ruler on your slide to draw straight lines.

Also, Word, Excel, and PowerPoint will support 3D models. Insert the 3D model, and change the perspective with rotation handles. There will even be transitions in PowerPoint, such as Morph, to create movie-like 3D animations.

Lastly, the Creators Update will enable you to easily contact and share with people faster with MyPeople. You'll have access to key people on your taskbar and the apps you use to connect and share. If your teammate needs that file for the meeting that starts in a couple minutes, all you'll have to do is drag-and-drop.

Even more features are coming in the Creators Update that will be announced soon. Windows 10 has improved deployment, security, productivity, and now it will even empower everyone to create.

[Drop us a line](#) to learn more about this.



# Microsoft Teams Is Here

## Microsoft's New Chat-Based Workspace



WRITTEN BY GINA MONTGOMERY

On November 2nd, 2016, Microsoft released a brand new chat-based digital workspace called Microsoft Teams. The Microsoft Teams Service is tied together by an intelligent fabric called Office 365 Groups.

Office 365 Groups is a group membership service powered by Azure AD that provides a single identity for teams in Office 365 and equips them with a set of group collaboration assets such as a calendar, a OneNote notebook, a Plan to manage tasks and conversations powered by Outlook or Yammer. These assets also provide common experiences that a group or team require when working together. Some of these experiences include: conversations, shared calendar, document repository, task management, and a team notebook.

So what does this mean? When an Office 365 user creates a Microsoft Team, all of those other amazing Groups experiences are also provisioned. It also means that we now have at least three different choices on where group conversations will take place.

Conversations for Groups can be in Outlook, Yammer, and now, Microsoft Teams. I think we can all agree that no two teams are the same and no two projects are the same. So the good news is, you have a choice. And the bad news is, you have a choice. Ultimately this choice will differ for teams based on personal preferences, business needs, security and compliance needs, and other factors related to the collaboration need. But, it's okay to have a one-size-doesn't-fit-all solution.

So let's dig in on what Microsoft Teams are made of. This service is based around four main principles:

1. A chat experience for today's teams
2. A hub for teamwork
3. A customizable experience for each team
4. Built-in security that teams trust

Microsoft has built a threaded, persistent chat scenario within Microsoft Teams. It allows for open group chats or private 1:1 chats. Built for today's teams, it also allows users to show personality with GIFs, stickers, custom

memes, and emojis. Skype for Business Online is integrated naturally and powers voice and video call functionality from right within the Team Channels.

Microsoft Teams is also a new hub for teamwork. It's integrated with SharePoint Online, Power BI, and Planner and is tied together by the Office 365 Groups Service. The Microsoft Graph provides intelligence to the service as well. Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and OneNote are also built into Teams to make adoption even easier. Search works well across files, chats, and people.

There is a customizable experience for each Team built into the services as well. Users can create tailored channels inside each team. There is a concept of Tabs available within the channel where you can pin common services like OneNote to the top of the channel. The Teams services can be extended with its open APIs and support of the Microsoft Bot Framework as well.



Security is also built in that Teams can easily trust. Other popular security features that you've been using with Office 365 and Azure AD are available in Teams. Data is encrypted at rest and in transit. Multi-factor authentication is available for another layer of protection. The Microsoft Teams service is served from Microsoft's global hyper-scale network and is centrally managed as part of Office 365 Business and Enterprise plans.

The Microsoft Teams service has a few main components. The Connection Microsoft Cloud Services Practice has been testing Teams for some time now. Let's take a look at some of our experiences with these components.

### Channels

Users can create a team and then channels underneath the team. Users will see all of their teams along the left-hand side navigation. Every team gets a default General channel. Think of channels as a place to have containerized discussions based on a certain topic within a team. We had the team put their creative hats on and add their best custom meme about their experience with Microsoft Teams so far in the General channel. It was a fun exercise.

### Tabs

You can find Tabs at the top of each Channel within a Team. Tabs are where teams can pin other common cloud services that they use frequently. Examples could be your Team's shared OneNote notebook, a Plan from Microsoft Planner for task management, or an Office app like PowerPoint. You will see Files there automatically. Files are stored in the Group's SharePoint Online Team Site.

### Bots

The Microsoft Teams Services comes with two Bots out of the box (OOTB).

- T-Bot is a "help bot." This bot can help your users onboard and learn quickly. They can ask T-Bot how to perform a certain action in Teams or users can browse through T-Bot's video-based how-to resources.
- WhoBot was shown off at the November 2nd Teams launch event but is not included

in the public preview at this time. WhoBot will help users find people based off of skills and off of things that they've recently been working on. During the launch event, I was shouting, "WhoBot FTW!" I am really looking forward to this functionality. People search has always been a challenge. Especially in large organizations where you don't know who everyone is and what their strengths are.

### Meetings

I'm sure you will agree that sometimes text-based communication can be easily misinterpreted and can also be challenging when trying to have a complicated conversation. Microsoft Teams provides a Meeting experience from within a channel. Inside the channel you will see a video icon; you can jump into the video conference, ad hoc or scheduled, and stay right inside the product.

Obviously I've shown you the more fun side of Microsoft Teams in these examples, but I do believe this is a chat experience for today's teams. There are many applications on how this can impact collaboration in your business.

Connection is always here for you if you want to discuss this further. Please contact your local Connection representative for more information.

If you're eager to get your hands on Microsoft Teams for testing purposes, here are the steps to try it out:

- You'll need an Office 365 Business or Enterprise Plan
- If you don't have one, we can assist you with a free trial of Office 365 E3 or E5
- You'll need Office 365 Global Admin Rights
- Go to the Admin Center inside Office 365 and click on:
  - Settings
  - Add-Ins
  - Enable Microsoft Teams
  - Download the Microsoft Teams Client <https://teams.microsoft.com/downloads>

We hope you love it as much as our team did!

[Drop us a line](#) to let us know what you think.





# PRODUCT NEWS

## 1) Introducing Windows Server Premium Assurance and SQL Server Premium Assurance

On December 8, 2016, Microsoft announced two new support offerings for its Software Assurance customers called Windows Server Premium Assurance and SQL Server Premium Assurance. These offerings add six additional years of product support beyond the end of Extended Support. You can purchase Windows Server Premium Assurance and SQL Server Premium Assurance separately or together, and both offerings will be available starting in early 2017. Buying before the end of June 2017 means you will save nearly 60% on the cost of Premium Assurance.

[Learn More](#)

## 2) Windows VDA per Device and Windows VDA per Device SKUs Price Changes

There will be an increase in the Windows VDA SKU prices by about 14% effective January 1, 2017. As part of this change, Microsoft will be launching a NEW VDA per User Add-On SKU for customers who want to upgrade from VDA per Device to VDA per User.

## 3) System Center Client Management

Starting January 1, 2017, the System Center Client Management Suite (CMS) license will be split into individual component licenses. The System Center CMS sold as a single license providing client management rights to Data Protection Manager, Operations Manager, Orchestrator and Service Manager will be transitioned into corresponding four individual component client management licenses.

## 4) What Is There for Business Users in Windows 10 Creators Update?

Windows 10 Creators Update isn't just about mixed reality and 3D. On December 6, Microsoft announced a bunch of features that are aimed at business users as part of the Creators Update. Windows 10 Creators Update will bring even more security advancements and improved IT management capabilities to enhance productivity and maintain the most secure IT environment possible.

[Learn More](#)

## 5) BizTalk Server 2016 Is Now Generally Available

BizTalk Server 2016 became generally available on December 1, 2016. BizTalk Server is an integration, B2B, and process automation server that enables customers to integrate diverse applications and create, execute, and monitor processes that span these applications on-premises or in the cloud. The three BizTalk Server 2016 editions are: BizTalk Server Enterprise, BizTalk Server Standard, and BizTalk and Server Branch. All three editions continue to be offered under the Per-Core licensing model and are priced the same as the current 2013 R2 version offerings.

[Why upgrade to BizTalk Server 2016?](#)

## 6) Visual Studio Team Foundation Server

The latest version of Visual Studio Team Foundation Server and Visual Studio Team Foundation Server Cal will be available starting December 2016. The Visual Studio Team Foundation Server provides a set of collaborative software development tools that integrate with your existing IDE or editor thus enabling your cross-functional team to work effectively on software projects of all sizes.

[Learn More](#)



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