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Microsoft Office 365: A Cloud Based Productivity in Business Environment

Divyani Anil Chandorkar[1], Prof. Harshali Patil[2]
[1]*MET's Institute of Computer Science, Bandra Mumbai University*
[2]*MET's Institute of Computer Science, Bandra Mumbai University*

Abstract: Online Services are provided by internet. An organisation that provides service over the internet needs access to the internet. Online services allow subscribers to communicate with each other and provides unlimited access to information. Basic service helps subscribers to gain needed information from search engine. It can be free or paid services. Microsoft Online Service is Microsoft's hosted service offerings.
The Microsoft Office 365 helps in saving time, money, low costs and free up valuable resources that ensures high productivity. Microsoft Office 365 provides familiar desktop tools like Office 2010 and collaborative services like SharePoint Online, OneDrive Online, Skype Online, Exchange Online, Microsoft Teams, Delve, Yammer. It also provides with developing tools like Power Apps, Microsoft flow and Power Bi for power user. This article will explain features and new offerings of Microsoft office 365 platform.
Keywords: On-Premise Services, Online Services, Cloud Computing, Microsoft Office 365

I. INTRODUCTION

All organizations today are moving from on premise software to online software. But what is premise software and online software? On-Premises software is installed and run on computers on the premise of the person or organisation using the software. Most businesses used an on-premises model a traditional approach. The organization's servers will be in the office, hardware and software licenses are purchased and they become the property of the business. On the other hand, online software is a business that provides a wide variety of data which is transmitted over telecommunications lines to its subscribers. Subscribers can communicate with one another, either by exchanging data over email, online conferencing, video meetings, etc. using infrastructure provided by online services. Using this service users can connect with an almost unlimited number of third-party information providers. It allows the subscribers to get up-to-date information, news stories, stock quotes, magazines, etc. In other terms, the subscriber has all the information that has been put in electronic form. One type of online computing service is Cloud computing. Cloud computing services models are of three types, viz. Software as a Service(SaaS), Platform as a Service(PaaS) and Infrastructure as a Service(IaaS). Software as a Service are provisioned on distant computers "in the cloud" that are owned and operated by a provider as a service to computers. The cloud based applications connect to user's computers via the Internet, usually via a web browser, allowing them to access data anywhere and at any time. One such service is Microsoft Office 365. It is a Web-based version of Microsoft's Office suite. Office 365 is delivered to users, includes Exchange Online for email, SharePoint Online for collaboration, Skype Online for unified communications, and a suite of Office Web Apps and Web-based versions of the traditional Microsoft Office suite of applications.[5].

A. Features of Office 365

Microsoft Office 365 gives much needed features for users to use their existing applications on cloud. Office 365 is like the user's personal office which is on cloud. It lets them work virtually from anywhere on almost any devices connected through internet.
It gives them easier way to work together and share the user's files across the organisation irrespective of the user's geographical location. It works well with all set of employees of all department in an organisation.
The features provided by suite Office 365 are as follows:
1) Be More Productive: Office 365 is all about making the employees more productive. The tools provide them with the existing office tools that they are used to but a more enhanced than earlier and enabling them to create, explore, share things at a greater pace. They can use it from anywhere, anytime for which the user doesn't have to be at their desk or use specific device. The user's devices may change but the user's personalised setting and content remains same for all devices. They will be with them, offline or online, so they can switch between devices and start where they left before. Productivity is all about making the user's job easier.

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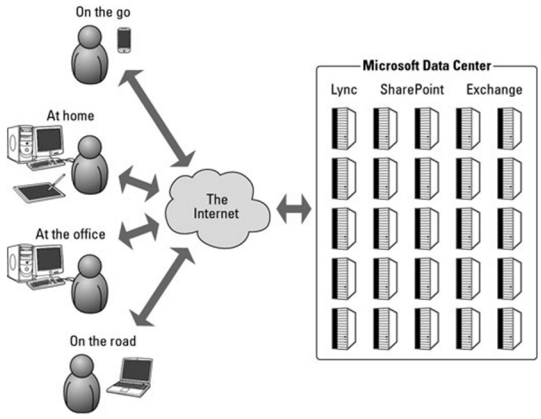
User and administrator experiences were made easy and simple as possible with office 365 [1] . When technology gets out of the way, working becomes easier and when it is easier it is more productive.

2) Access From Anywhere : Accessing the user's organisation from anywhere has many advantages. For employees to access their work, all they need is a desktop or a laptop or a mobile phone or tablet. With this they require internet or phone network. The software runs at the Microsoft data centre so it is easy to access using internet.



The biggest advantage is data integrity. If the user makes changes to the document from office and the same document is accessed by the user's friend from home using tablet, he/she will get the up-to-date document which is recently updated.

3) Work with what is known: Microsoft very well knows what user is comfortable with and it will not give things which is not known to user. Office 365 hasn't changed the user's favourite professional tools but it has now seamlessly connected those software with cloud. For example, in SharePoint Online they can check out document, make changes and check it back again.

4) Store, Sync, And Share the user's Content: The user's files and documents aren't stuck anywhere when they store everything on cloud. Instead of multiple people creating multiple versions at different places, everyone can work on same document irrespective of place and time. Office 365 keeps track of each activity so documents are always updated.

5) Provide the Right support: Office 365 helps them to provide IT support, where people can get in touch with IT, browse and submit ticket requests to get help. Quick answers to common problems. Better system maintenance with regular health checks. More focused conversations between IT and user. It keeps all software are services up-to-date. Services are available 99.9 % uptime [2].

6) Stay on Track And Deliver on Time: Office 365 makes the user's life easier to organise teamwork all around a common milestone. Work can be done easily and it is easy to manage, prioritized and track the work. One can keep an eye on important details with real time summary of the user's project that warns and keeps the user's delay and milestone on radar. Project Professional is used to manage dependencies and balance and generate status reports when they work with complex projects. It gets synced with the site, and continue to work together to keep the user's project on track.

7) Security and Reliability: Microsoft takes care of security and reliability. The user's IT team do not have to worry much about it. It saves their time so it can be useful for other software assistant to users.

8) Keep everyone informed: The user's company has a unique story, great tales etc. How to excite the user's employees with new vision? Office 365 gives a whole set of tools where they can communicate, discuss and stay engaged with the people they work with. It is with this that they keep the user's employees together with a for vision moving forward together.

9)Boost business processes: One can boost the one's business processes by automating recurring approval or review processes. It is easy and doesn't take much time to build flows.

Reports can be created and refrained as per need. They can also keep eye on team, department and entire organization.

II. OFFICE 365 OFFERINGS

Microsoft Office 365 is a package suite of services that ensures user with all existing services and tools to be used in office to increase speed of work and productivity. It consists of many products such as SharePoint Online, OneDrive Online, Skype Online, Exchange Online, Microsoft Teams, Delve, Yammer. Office Web App enables users to view edit office applications like Word, Excel, PowerPoint, OneNote. Office 365 is solution focussed at companies, organizations, or institutions that have internal communication and document sharing without establishing expensive infrastructure. It is mainly integrated with desktop

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applications so that it can now be used in mobile platform as well. The office has setup workstations for managing required components and updates.

A. Word Online

Users can work with documents directly on website. It lets them make basic edit and formatting changes to their document in web browser. It provides Microsoft word experience to the web browser, advance features; Word Online is Open in Word command. When the user saves, it gets saved on website and open's in Web App[3]. Rulers and guidelines are not displayed. Permissions can be modified, for example if a document requires password to modify it opens in Word Online in Read view. But the document can be edited in browser. A pdf viewer is required to print the Word Online document.

B. Excel Online.

The user can work on workbooks where it is stored on website in excel online. Larger workbooks cannot exceed 10MB and cannot be viewed in Excel Online from within SharePoint Online. For larger files, it needs to be downloaded in excel desktop app. Pivot tables and graph are supported.

C. PowerPoint Online

In Online they can work directly on website where presentation is stored. PowerPoint Online extends Microsoft PowerPoint to web browser. User can view, create and edit files on go if they are Microsoft Office 365 customers. On Click of Edit Browser button the user's PowerPoint Online will go in Edit Mode. It allows user to work on documents without losing fidelity, because PowerPoint is web front-end based component which creates browser-based editing surface. Document display is done using Microsoft Silverlight technology.

D. Outlook

Microsoft Office 365 Suite provides us with a personal manager from Microsoft that is Microsoft Outlook. It is an email application, but it also includes tasks, manager, calendar, note making, journal. It is a great use to organization, it can be used as a standalone applications or with Microsoft Exchange and Microsoft SharePoint Online where shared mailboxes and calendars are accessed. Outlook helps them to record them important meetings and set flag to it. It is easy to keep track of calendar with the important tasks using outlook.

E. Exchange Online

Microsoft Exchange Online which is a hosted messaging application. Microsoft Office 365 provides organization with full features of Exchanges Server. Exchange Online includes emails, task management, calendar, contacts. The most important feature of it is services are accessed across Wide Area Network so there is no requirement of exchange server packages to be configured on each machine. It reduces the expense and support for mail services. Exchange Online can be accessed on different devices such as laptops, desktop, notebooks, tablets and Mac systems as well. It can be even easily accessed on mobile devices like Apple, Androids, Blackberry, Windows phone. Exchange Online Email is accessed through Microsoft Outlook 2010[4]. As Exchange Online is located on cloud so messages are saved to a centrally located place on cloud which is easy to access from any device. Specific tool is used for transferring mailboxes from client version of outlook to cloud version.

F. SharePoint Online

SharePoint Online is known for simple sharing and collaboration. It allows people to share and collaborate on intranet, organise and collaborate on data and content to stay on some page. Inform and connect people on intranet. Organise data in libraries and list with metadata, records management and retention policies. Communicate the user's group message across the organization with beautiful

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communication sites. Use workflows to automate the organisation processes. Unlike SharePoint software, in SharePoint Online, the user's don't have to take care of server and version upgradation, it is all managed by Microsoft. SharePoint Online in Office 365 now includes new development, installations and use of apps.

G. Skype Online

Office 365 package comes with Skype Online service. It offers number of communication options based on IM(Instant Messages), skype meetings, video conferencing, recordings. People share their desktops with integrated options in skype. It also allows viewing documents from SharePoint, making distribution list and administration through centralised network. Remote participants can be brought to meeting room space using mobile apps to connect the user's teams

H. Microsoft Teams

Microsoft Teams is to explore data and updates from the user's teams every day and create channels based on topics or work streams. Files and websites can be pinned for the user's references. Bots can be added to work on behalf of the user's teams. Teams developer platform helps them to build custom integration to existing business processes. Outlook is now updated to tams meeting. Teams meeting can now be scheduled from outlook. Dedicated phone number for placing and receiving domestic or international phone calls with features like voice mail, delegation and emerging call.

I. Yammer

Yammer is used to connects users in a team with better options/level. Work smarter work together. Connect with people across the user's organisation and make decisions better and faster. Know what's happening in organisation. They can know from all announcements to big stories of organisation. Connect to top level people to know everyone's success and achievements. Spend less time on thinking and get quick reply to the questions raised or any queries and get productive and spontaneous answers with experts across organisations.

J. One Drive

One Drive makes it easy for the users to store and share files. Access to files becomes easier from all the user's devices. Edits that are done offline are automatically updated when they connect. Sharing and collaboration can be done with anyone across the user's organisation. Keep the user's company data protected with advanced encryption and security compliance.

K. Staff Hub

There are more than millions of workers around the world in retailers, hotels, restaurants, organizations and other industry where the employees typically don't have their own office desk or computing it is hard to get their information in work day. Staff hub is here to help with this problem. It helps workers- schedule management, share information, and ability to connect with other workers and management. Managers can easily create, updates and manage shifts for their teams, keep track of their shifts. Employees can swap shifts and request time off to manager.

L. Power Apps and Microsoft Flow

The user can create the user's own business application for business power user. Development is so very easy with using this development tool. It is easy to select from where the user's data should come from such as Common Data Service, SharePoint, Excel. Microsoft Flow helps them to automate the user's process using workflow without any development tool. Microsoft has more than 200 templates and connectors to use and create the flow. Create customized flow that can be used to automate the user's work in organisation.

M. Power BI

Microsoft Office 365 provides a tool that is used for data analysis and interactive visualization with business capabilities. Reports and dashboards can be easily created by end users. They do not have to depend on information technology staff.

III. CASE STUDY

As a part of research, a survey was circulated to people who are familiar with and are using Office 365 to know the benefits and features of on-premises and Office 365. Out of all the candidates, 75% are using Office 365 and 25% are familiar with Office 365.

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The survey gave distinct information about various Office 365 features that user has experiences. In this survey, we have provided users with key features that are exclusive to Office 365. In figure 1, we have results from our primary research that shows that people are more inclined or experienced 60% for features as More Security and Reliability, Access from Anywhere, Work with what you know and Boost business process. 30% people who believed more in two features as Work with what you know and Keep everyone informed. 10% has their own additional feature experience such as faster and easier access,More productive and good storage capability.

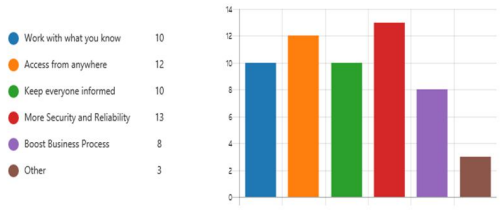

Figure 1 : Results from primary research

Apart from features we tried to know about basic offering of Office 365 as compared to On-premise. Listed below are a few offerings that was used to compare: 1) Sites have external authenticated user. 2) Possibility of Sharing content externally? 3) All maintenance and support handled by Microsoft. 4) Reporting and analysis using Microsoft Office Graph. 5) Infrastructure cost and seamless upgradation possible. 6) All Office 365 products tightly integrated.

This survey helped us to know in Fig.2. 84% candidates supported that the features mentioned are exclusive to Office 365. 12% said the offerings were of On-Premise. 4% are still not confident whether it is from Office 365 or On-Premise that helped to give these offerings. Office 365 was at 3.65 average rating. The average rating was calculated based on each individual ratings to Office 365.

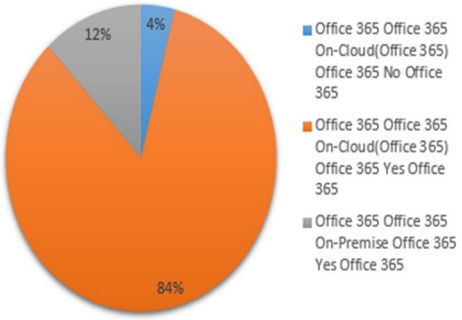

Figure 2.Comparison Office 365 vs On-Premise

In a similar case study Avanade and Accenture have completed one of the biggest deployments of Office 365 involving more than 290,000 users, 11000 site and across 54 countries. Over the course of a year, Avanade and Accenture was able to achieve the following : 290,000 users moved to Microsoft Exchange Online, 13,000 Microsoft SharePoint Online sites created and approx. 13TBs of data moved [6].

IV. IV. OFFICE 365 USE CASES

A. Exchange Server

The on-premise Exchange posed a great problem for organizations using it as their default email application because as soon it reached its capacity for holding messages, it crashed. For years, these organizations hired dedicated IT technicians for this issue which was not cost effective. Office 365 eliminates the need to manage the Exchange Server and the possibility that the server can experience the downtime.

Collaborating on a document without confusing the different versions:

In an organization, collaboration is important and a single platform that allows multiple employees to work on the same document or presentation is widely appreciated. O365's online software allows all this and more. People anywhere can work on the same document while being assured that it is the latest version of the document, unlike when using on-premise software, which requires the user to mail or transfer documents after every small change to keep others updated.

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B. SharePoint Online

It empowers sharing and collaboration on your intranet. Office 365 gets new feature of external sharing and collaboration instead of setting up extranet environment. Provides OneDrive for business that is move sites to the cloud and make it easier for user to access file remotely. Create sites with new Team sites in Office 365. Office 365 and on-premises BCS SharePoint environment can be integrated.

V. CONCLUSION

Cloud Computing is a group of computers and its software on which services are installed which are then provided by the internet. Cloud enforces organisations to focus on their main business rather than on infrastructure and maintenance. So, what we know is it has advantages and disadvantages. Advantages of cloud computing is to use only those services that are needed. Users don't have to buy these services instead they can use it on cloud. Disadvantages are availability and safety. Office 365 gives us all features together that is mainly necessary for an organisation. Office 365 Package suite is very powerful that gives all applications and tools in one package. User can do all processing in Office 365. Microsoft takes care of users' privacy and security. Users' content is all stored on cloud and has one single central repository so easy to access and update to one place. Finally, expenses are very much cost effective it impacts cost of Office 365 to organization. Finally, users' business needs depend on their prices, users experience with these new tools and their approach to new learnings. But it is very much useful and cost effective to work smartly, faster and efficiently.

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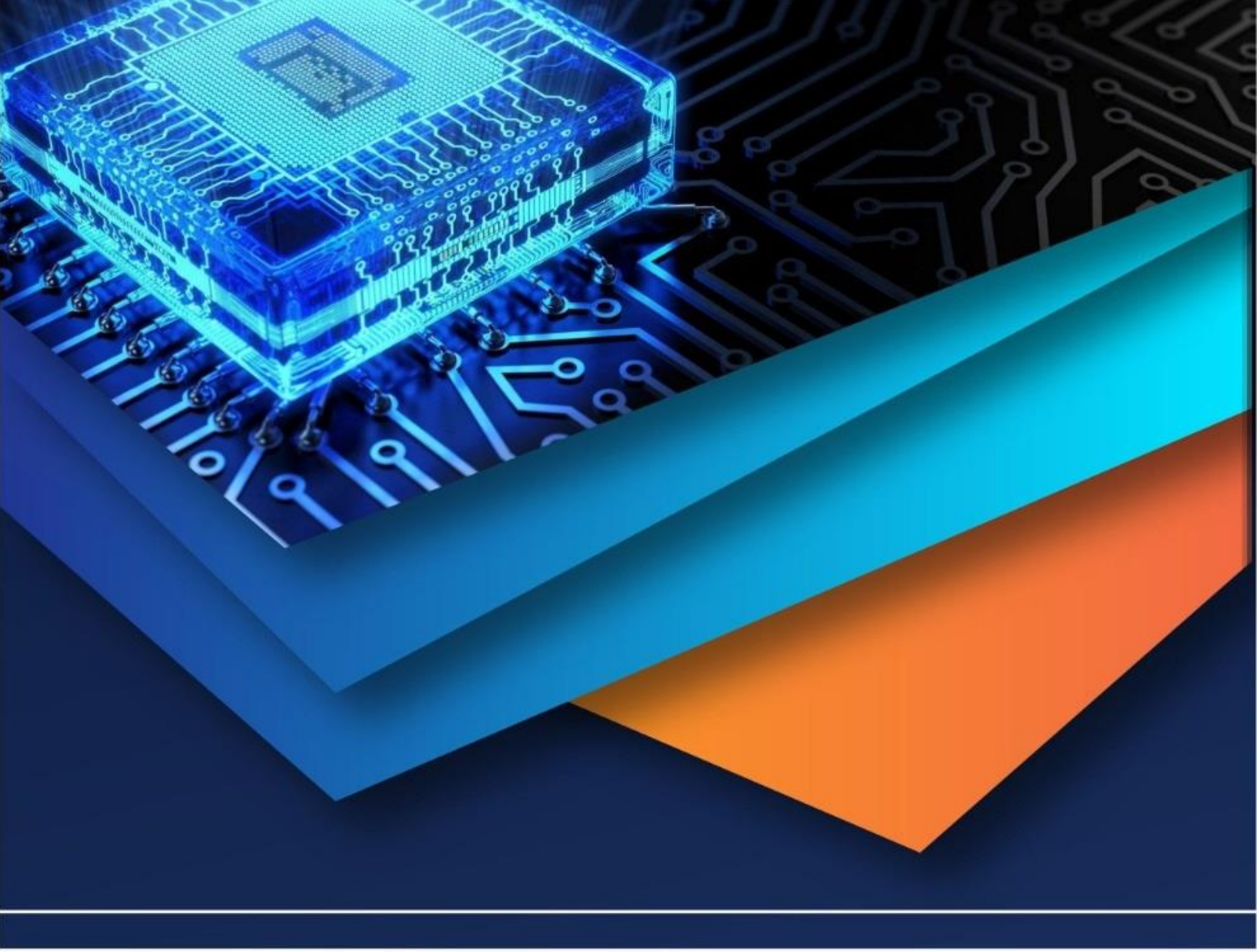

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