

Look before You Leap into Google Apps

Public Sector Supplement

UNIQUE CONSIDERATIONS FOR PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS

Public Sector organizations around the world are looking for transformative ways to serve their citizens and spur economic growth and opportunity. The challenges of Public Sector institutions are growing more complex, with the impact of globalization on economies and the earth, evolving security threats, or the ability to provide education, healthcare, and other vital services to their citizens. In the face of the global economic challenges of the past few years, the Public Sector has to address those expanding concerns, and create jobs and economic opportunity with a shrinking set of resources.

To balance these requirements, Public Sector organizations are increasingly looking to technology tools and best practices to help reach, communicate, and engage with the communities they serve. The clamor for government at every level to trim down but accomplish more has never been louder. It's a seemingly impossible mandate, but with the right set of tools, agencies can meet that challenge head on.

Microsoft® Office 365 combines the familiar Microsoft Office Professional Plus applications your agency uses every day with cloud-based versions of Microsoft communication and collaboration services—Microsoft Exchange Online, Microsoft SharePoint® Online, and Microsoft Lync™ Online—to enable new levels of productivity. Moving productivity tools and services to the cloud, at a controlled pace that makes sense for your organization, gives you the flexibility and productivity capabilities you need to meet your agency objectives. And delivering them as a subscription service helps relieve you of the expense of maintaining software and hardware on-premises.

Google Apps may seem like an acceptable solution for delivering the office-productivity, messaging, and collaboration technology many Public Sector organizations seek. But the unique requirements of Public Sector organizations for records and document retention, email archiving, accessibility, and security can make Google Apps an unsuitable replacement for enterprise-grade products such as Microsoft Exchange Server or Microsoft Office.

Microsoft offers a set of familiar tools many agencies rely on already for every day productivity, communication, and collaboration, which now extends the suite of applications seamlessly from the desktop to the web—and even to mobile devices. With Office 365, Public Sector organizations can enable cloud computing, empower telework and deskless workers, ensure continuity of operations, help improve security, and manage email compliance.

RECORDS RETENTION

Public Sector organizations face unique challenges in retaining records and ensuring the fidelity of archived content in order to respond to public inquiry and meet compliance mandates. Documents, files, emails, instant messaging chats, and the metadata associated with content may all be considered a “government record” in many jurisdictions. Failure to meet records retention requirements can lead to penalties for non-compliance, loss of public confidence, and in some cases even national security risk.

The importance of Public Sector records is reinforced by records retention laws. For example, in the U.S., the Federal Records Act, the E Government Act of 2002, and the implementing regulations issued by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) require that all government records must be maintained in a way that retains their functionality and integrity. Additionally, U.S. state and local laws, similar to the Sunshine Law, require that records be retained for a minimum time period in their original format.

When evaluating solutions for office-productivity, messaging, and collaboration in your Public Sector organization, consider asking providers the following questions about records retention:

Records Retention Concerns	Questions to Ask
Does the solution ensure accurate representation of the facts to which the record attests?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the essential elements of content retained, including electronic signatures and page numbers?
How does the solution protect against unauthorized use or alteration of the record?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If users delete email threads from their inboxes, does a record still exist of the email threads or the content? • How can an organization maintain proof that deleted mail existed?
Will the solution maintain the physical and logical format of the records, and the relationships between the data elements?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is the format translated or transformed when uploading from, or downloading to common/standard document formats like .doc or .pdf?
Will the solution enable the transfer of records, including their associated metadata, to new storage media or formats?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is metadata retained when uploading or downloading to documents? • Does the transfer of records create breaks in content that commonly result in core data and format loss?

Microsoft takes a holistic approach to Public Sector records management with Office 2010, SharePoint Online, and Exchange Online. These solutions help organizations improve document fidelity and functionality, while enhancing agencies' abilities to meet compliance measures "behind the scenes" with features like document types, retention policies, and automatic content sorting. Specifically, SharePoint has built-in records management tools to apply retention schedules, declare records, and place legal holds, whether your organization is dealing with traditional content, web content, or social content. Exchange Server comes with advanced archiving capabilities and immutable database.

These Microsoft solutions also support enhanced document fidelity when files move from the desktop to the web or to the phone. In contrast, Google Apps may not support the level of document fidelity required by Public Sector organization record retention policies. Commonly used Microsoft Word features such as watermarks, tables of contents, headers and footers, page numbers, tables, and formatting can be lost when converting a Word document to Google Docs.

EMAIL ARCHIVING

Email messages and their metadata are also considered records in most countries and jurisdictions. Email holds much of the information organizations use daily, making the need to easily preserve and search this information essential. Exchange Server 2010 offers searchable, legally-compliant email archiving for Public Sector organizations.

With role-based access control in Exchange Server 2010, administrators can grant users such as records managers, compliance officers, and litigators specific rights to perform multi-mailbox searches and other role-specific tasks. Retention policies can be used to apply settings to specific items, conversations, or folders in a mailbox. Policies are configured by the Exchange Server 2010 administrator and are displayed in Microsoft Outlook 2010 inside each email along with a header stating the applied policy.

Public sector organizations may also require that records data reside at all times in servers located within specific geographic boundaries, or in servers the operation and maintenance of which are subject only to the laws of the a specific country. For example, the European Union Model Clauses put limitations on the transfer or movement of organizational data outside European Union member countries. As part of the launch of the Microsoft Online Services Trust Center, Microsoft has agreed to and signed the European Union Model Clauses. In addition, Microsoft is committed to transparency through the Microsoft Online Services Trust Center, which provides detailed information for customers and partners worldwide related to privacy, security, and compliance practices—including the European Model Clauses and European Union Safe Harbor requirements.

Microsoft Online Services Trust Center

The [Microsoft Online Services Trust Center](#) provides in-depth information about Microsoft privacy and security practices. Because Microsoft appreciates the trust customers place in Microsoft Online Services to manage valuable data, Microsoft strives to be as transparent as possible about how customer information is handled. The Trust Center provides information to help customers understand and assess Microsoft practices for handling and securing data on Microsoft Online Services.

Federal agencies in the U.S. also require the primary and backup data centers for email and records retention services to be physically located in the United States. This includes data centers that store email, documents, administrative data, support data, email archiving, and billing data, transmitted via the system or maintained in the system. These systems are used to store and transmit highly sensitive government and private entity data, so the data transmitted must only be subject to disclosure pursuant to U.S. law and not the laws of any other jurisdiction or foreign nation.

Many Public Sector agencies are looking to the cloud for email solutions that may reduce IT costs. While Google mail solutions powered by Postini may seem like a possible fit, there may be serious drawbacks that could make these offerings unsuitable for government agencies. Public Sector organizations face high demand to do more with less and fewer budget dollars, but they also need features that enhance office productivity and eliminate wasted effort. Furthermore, for Public Sector organizations, the capabilities of email services—email, calendaring/scheduling, global address book, etc.—are mission critical and need to be maintained during any transitional period.

When evaluating solutions for office-productivity, messaging, and collaboration in your Public Sector organization, consider asking providers the following questions about email archiving:

Email Archiving Concerns	Questions to Ask
Does the solution offer enterprise-class information rights protection?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition to encryption of email and attachments, does the solution offer the ability to restrict the rights of email recipients to forward, copy, print, or reply?
Does the provider guarantee archiving and backup is located within specific geographic boundaries?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the web-only architecture of the solution, is data stored across distributed servers around the world? • What guarantee is provided for location-specific data storage?
Is rich content archived in its original format?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the web-only architecture of the solution limit formatting options? • Will users retain the ability to select and use Rich Text Format, HTML format, or Plain Text format for email messages?
Do calendar archives record mandatory and optional attendee lists of appointments?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the solution allow distinction of mandatory and optional attendees for calendar appointments? • How are mandatory and optional attendee lists recorded in calendar archives?
Does the solution retain all attachments, including those in calendar appointments?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does spam filtering block attachments, whether in mail or in appointments, preventing the archival of attachments? • Do scheduled appointments with attachments make attachments available to all users, regardless of system being used?
Does the solution offer the ability to provide delivery receipts and read receipts?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the solution does not provide delivery or read receipts, how will email archives retain information about whether emails were received or read?

ACCESSIBILITY

Accessibility enables people of all abilities to realize their full potential. Microsoft creates technology that is accessible to people around the world—of all ages and abilities.¹ Office 2010 and Office 365 continue this dedication to making productivity and collaboration products more available to people with disabilities, as well as helping all users create more accessible content. For Public Sector organizations, providing an accessible computing environment is just as important for inclusion as making a facility physically accessible.

¹ <http://www.microsoft.com/enable/microsoft/section508.aspx>

The web-only architecture of Google Apps significantly limits accessibility features, making it more difficult for government agencies to achieve their goals for digital inclusion. Microsoft provides a superior experience for accessibility, with rich applications and advanced accessibility features like accessibility checker, which helps all users to create accessible content within Office. The extensive work Microsoft has done in the Windows® operating system also benefits Office and many other products. For example, with Windows Internet Explorer®, users can view Office 365 pages in high-contrast mode to make them easier to read. With Alt tags, users can place a cursor over an image in Office 365 pages to make a text description of the image appear for use with screen readers or other assistive technologies. For information about the efforts at Microsoft to create software and services that are accessible to everyone, see the [Microsoft Accessibility website](#).

See how California State University evaluated Google Apps and found that “most had significant accessibility problems which inhibit users of assistive technology from successful, regular use of the products.” Read the [ATI Google Apps Accessibility Evaluation](#).

The importance of accessibility is reinforced by law in many countries and jurisdictions. For example, in the U.S., the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, federal, state and local government, public accommodations, commercial facilities, transportation, and telecommunications. In addition, Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act requires U.S. federal agencies to give disabled employees and members of the public access to information that is comparable to access available to others unless there is undue burden. These laws typically do not require software companies to build in accessibility features nor provide technical specifications for software. Compliance with Section 508 or similar laws throughout the world is typically managed or executed by procurement officers, who depend upon vendors conducting accessibility testing and providing standardized reports to show how a software product meets key regulations.

For many public and private organizations it can be difficult to assess the relative capabilities of different products. The Microsoft commitment to accessible products and solutions proactively supports government in making well-informed accessible technology choices. When evaluating solutions for office-productivity, messaging, and collaboration in your Public Sector organization, consider asking providers the following questions about accessibility:

Accessibility Concerns	Questions to Ask
How do accessibility features in the solution help agencies meet the requirements of Section 508 or similar laws?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will the provider share documentation describing how accessibility features in the solution help agencies meet the requirements of Section 508 or similar laws? What third-party tools may be needed, on top of the solution, to enable accessibility?

Microsoft works closely with Public Sector IT managers and fellow technology-industry leaders to help governments comply with current and new regulations that require making electronic information and technology accessible to government employees and members of the public with disabilities. Microsoft voluntarily describes how its products help federal agencies address the requirements of Section 508 Standards in the U.S., for example, with Voluntary Product Accessibility Templates (VPAT). The standardized VPAT form was developed by the Information Technology Industry Council to show how a software product meets key regulations of Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. Microsoft currently provides ten VPATs for Microsoft Office to assist federal contracting officials in making preliminary assessments regarding technologies and features that support accessibility. To review all the VPATs Microsoft provides for its range of products and solutions, see <http://www.microsoft.com/industry/government/products/section508>.

Another way Microsoft supports accessibility is by implementing key technology standards for accessibility, contributing to the development of new standards, and working to improve existing standards. For example, W3C, an industry consortium that develops web standards, drives a program to create web standards for accessibility. In developing SharePoint 2010, Microsoft set a goal for Level AA conformance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 for the general end user interface and has published statements on conformance with the accessibility standard. Google does not provide any statements or documentation on their conformance to WCAG 2.0 standard.

THE MYTH OF THE GOVERNMENT CLOUD

Cloud computing has grown from a promising business concept into one of the fastest-growing segments of the information technology industry. Facing tough economic conditions and a constant pressure to accomplish more with less,

Public Sector organizations are looking into cloud solutions for fast access to best-of-breed applications, computing resources, storage, and other infrastructure at a much lower cost.

However, government data includes classified or confidential documents, court records, and other files and information that should be stored in secure datacenters. The truth is that backend IT systems are most important for enabling the document security that both Public and Private Sector organizations need. With a 25 year history in infrastructure technology and security innovations, Microsoft has the proven track-record and expertise with end-to-end solutions that help keep a whole organization and its records more secure, beyond just email. The Microsoft Online Services Trust Center² demonstrates the Microsoft commitment to meeting the specific requirements of government in terms of certifications, security, and privacy. Microsoft provides a broad level of transparency with in-depth information about the company’s privacy and security practices. Microsoft also supports Public Sector security and compliance objectives by underpinning its services with a comprehensive set of controls that align with the unique requirements of government agencies. The design and operational effectiveness of these controls are internally assessed by Microsoft staff and external auditors on an ongoing basis.

While Google Apps may seem like an adequate solution on the surface, the reality is that Public Sector organizations require more secure backend systems that deliver enhanced capabilities across a range of productivity applications. For example, many agencies must be able to respond to and service citizen requests using email systems that interoperate with a customer relationship management (CRM) application. Microsoft designs interoperability into Office, Exchange, SharePoint, and Microsoft Dynamics so these systems connect and enable seamless productivity experiences for Public Sector use scenarios. The web-only architecture of Google Apps may significantly limit the ability of organizations to connect backend systems and service citizen requests.

These problems also create serious desktop management challenges, adding large hidden costs for IT administration. Use of many Google products—for example Outlook Sync, Google Talk, and Google Chrome—require installing local software and allowing local administration rights, which then must be administered by each individual desktop user. Public Sector organizations will increase security risk as more end users gain local admin rights.

Productivity may also be interrupted by service downtime associated with several Google Apps. According to the Google Apps Service Level Agreement, the web interface will be available to customers at least 99.9% of the time in any calendar month. However, the agreement does not include coverage for Gmail Labs functionality, Google Apps Postini Services, Gmail Voice or Video Chat components, Gears (offline email), Contacts, app engine, marketplace applications, and all new applications including Picasa, Blogger, and others.

When evaluating solutions for office-productivity, messaging, and collaboration in your Public Sector organization, consider asking providers the following questions about the government cloud:

Government Cloud Concerns	Questions to Ask
How is the solution packaged for central deployment or streamlined management?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the solution require installation of local software? • Does the solution require an organization to allow local administration rights?
What does the Service Level Agreement include and exclude?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If applications or components of the solution are not covered under the SLA, how will web interface downtime affect my organization’s productivity?

Microsoft offers a broad set of secure and flexible end-to-end solutions, from backend IT to cloud services, designed to address the specific needs and priorities of Public Sector organizations, local institutions, and local populations. The Microsoft approach, built on more than a quarter century of experience in Public Sector, focuses on helping leaders and institutions innovate on their own terms through technology and an array of partnerships and programs. Through this holistic approach, Microsoft helps governments, schools, hospitals, and other public institutions strategically harness the power of technology.

² <http://www.microsoft.com/online/legal/v2/?docid=21&langid=en-us>