

Newsletter - September 2017 Microsoft 365 Business... Whaaaat?

I had hoped to write about this in July, but vacations and a busy summer delayed things... Microsoft released (rather quietly) a new product aimed squarely at... Google. The new product (see title of this article) is an entire software and management package wrapped up in a nice tidy bow. I am being somewhat facetious when saying it's aimed at Google - more precisely, it is aimed at the same market segment Google Docs is aimed at: Small / Medium Businesses without a dedicated IT Staff, and maybe even some with a small 1-or-2 person IT Staff.

So What's In The Box?

There's not really a box, it's all delivered via downloads from Microsoft. The download includes everything a business needs: a copy of Windows10 Professional (or upgrade from prior versions) + Office365 (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Publisher, Access) + Email + OneDrive Cloud Storage (similar to DropBox). But wait there's more: Management tools to control the devices and user logins, remotely install software, anti-virus, and other security settings. If that sounds like a traditional Microsoft Client/Server On-Premises setup, you are correct: it is the first step in moving your entire business into "The Cloud" ... Microsoft's Cloud, that is.

Why?

Microsoft has finally realized that "do-it-yourself" architecture is rapidly becoming a dodo-bird in smaller organizations. Client/Server setup is not for the faint of heart: it means you buy an expensive server and network gear, install expensive server software, hook up the office computers, read all kinds of manuals, set all kinds of arcane commands and bizarre settings on the server, and Voila! maybe in 3-6 months you will have something that actually works. In other words, don't try this at home, leave it to the professionals. Which is exactly why Google has been eating Microsoft's lunch in the Small Business market: Google's "business in the cloud" setup is much simplified and welcomes the non-professional IT person who knows what they want, but wishes to avoid spending the rest of their lives managing IT stuff. Microsoft is (correctly) going after that market as well: I applaud the effort, it is a good product and perfect for a small biz. [Read More about Microsoft 365](#)

Product Of The Month: Reflector 2

This product maybe won't be relevant for home use, but in a business or school environment where you need to wirelessly display a device up on a projector or TV monitor, it's golden. I've tried Google ChromeCast, Apple AirPlay, and Microsoft's MirraCast, each of which has some quirk that makes it incompatible with all devices. Enter a software-only solution: Reflector 2. *Warning, One Drawback: you will need to have a dedicated desktop or laptop connected to your projector.* After installing Reflector, you now have a universal A/V receiver that can display iPhone, iPad, Chromebooks, Windows and Macs. Simply use your device's menu to display wirelessly, connect to the dedicated Reflector machine, and then the magic happens: your small screen is projected up on the big screen. Reflector is published by AirSquirrels, Inc. – [AirSquirrels website](#)

Happy Labor Day!

-John Becker