A 360° Look at Office 365.

Apps you may not have heard about.

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Table of contents.

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Going beyond Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and Excel.

Microsoft Office continues to be the office productivity suite of choice for law firms all over the world. Anyone working at a desk is most likely proficient in popular apps such as Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.

2011, Microsoft further cemented the Office suite as a flagship product by offering it as a cloud-based app, enabling users to collaborate on Office documents in real time wherever there is an internet connection. And if you don't have your desktop or laptop with you, you can use your Microsoft account to log onto the web versions of the productivity apps as well as access files you've synced to the cloud.

However, those features just scratch the surface of what Office 365 is all about. Over the years, it has expanded to include heavy-lifting apps that let you and your team achieve unprecedented levels of collaboration and productivity.

Let's take an in-depth look at what's included in a subscription, so you'll be able to get the most out of **Office 365**.

Powerful Office 365 apps to incorporate into your workflow.

SharePoint Online.

Microsoft SharePoint Online is a cloud-based portal for storing, managing, and analyzing data within an organization. Going beyond basic productivity apps like Word and PowerPoint, SharePoint delivers data-based solutions for a wide variety of business challenges.

Content Management.

SharePoint Online is primarily a centralized content management system (CMS) where users can publish, edit, and access digital content, from routine paperwork to sensitive records. It also lets administrators control how documents are accessed and shared throughout their lifecycle. This is especially useful if your law firm has trouble keeping up with massive archives of data. Some of SharePoint's most handy content management components include:

1. Asset library.

Manages media assets such as images, audio, and video files in a specialized archive.

2. Content organizer.

Automates routine processes involved in document management. The content organizer can route documents to specific folders and libraries, keep track of duplicate files, and limit the number of items within a folder.

3. Audit trails.

Monitors changes to documents and SharePoint sites, particularly when they were made, and who was responsible for them.

4. Managed metadata.

Tags documents and media files with unique identifiers for easier, faster searches.

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5. eDiscovery center.

Allows you to hold, export, and retrieve information for compliance audits and legal cases.

6. Permissions management.

Lets you set access privileges based on job roles to prevent unauthorized access to sensitive information

7. Records management.

Establishes document retention and disposal policies according to industry best practices and regulations.

Enterprise search.

Navigating dozens of sites and content libraries is a breeze thanks to SharePoint's enterprise search features. Instead of sifting through folders manually, you can retrieve files in an instant by entering keywords in a search bar. You can then refine your search by relevance, file type, author, and date modified.

SharePoint also uses machine learning to suggest documents that are contextually related to your search. What's more, SharePoint continuously processes and indexes every item in the content library to ensure tags and searches are always up to date.

Business intelligence.

Another core feature of SharePoint Online is its business intelligence center. By consolidating databases (from Excel or other enterprise software) into a central location, SharePoint users can distill meaningful insights that result in smarter decision making. For example, you can create dashboards that track productivity and efficiency of attorneys in the office. Additionally, SharePoint retains live connections with data sources, so team dashboards are always up to date.

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Team sites.

If you're trying to pull together employees from various departments, creating a SharePoint team site will make your life easier. Team sites are loaded with a default library for documents, data management settings, and customizable web designs. Authorized members can access the site and upload or view content from approved devices and locations so everyone has a hub for the project.

On a team site home page, you can create links to team-specific files and apps, and set a dashboard to track recent site activities. Sites also get a shared task planner and OneNote notebook for brainstorming ideas with the group.

Social features.

SharePoint Online can even host a newsfeed that aggregates company news, social media posts, work-related content, and law industry trends. Encouraging individuals to post expert insights to these feeds is a terrific way to break down organizational silos.

Finally, SharePoint Online lets users create wiki sites where employees can collectively edit the content and structure of a multi-page site. Some of the best internal resources for HR processes, accounting requirements, and other office tasks were crowdsourced SharePoint wikis!

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Outlook.

Almost everyone knows that Microsoft Outlook is an email platform that puts emails, calendars, contacts, and tasks all in one place. However, few people are aware of all the powerful productivity tools it has for taming overflowing inboxes, schedules, and projects.

Clutter.

Machine learning has made email overload a thing of the past. Microsoft's Clutter feature analyzes how you typically deal with certain types of messages and cleans up your inbox for you. Mark less important messages as "clutter" and Outlook will automatically move those and similar messages into the "clutter" folder.

Calendar.

Outlook's versatile scheduling tool allows you to:

1. **Create appointments and events.**

Simply click any time slot in the Outlook calendar to create your appointment or event and customize a reminder.

Outlook also analyzes your emails and automatically adds important dates to your calendar such as travel reservations, package deliveries, and bill payment deadlines.

2. **Organize meetings.**

Outlook allows you to view the calendars of everyone on your team so you can find the perfect meeting time. After that, it's just a matter of creating a calendar event and adding attendees' email addresses. They'll receive an RSVP message and their response will be updated in your calendar.

You can even share your calendar availability externally or send calendar invites to people outside of your organization.

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3. Manage another user's calendar.

With the Delegate Access feature, users can let someone else manage their Outlook calendar. For example, administrative assistants can use this feature to create, move, or delete appointments and organize meetings on their bosses' behalf.

4. View calendars side-by-side.

You can create multiple calendars — for example, a separate calendar for your personal appointments and another for your work appointments — and view both side-by-side. You can then identify your common free times and copy or move appointments between the displayed calendars.

Connectors.

Office 365 Connectors immediately delivers relevant content and updates from third-party services (Twitter, publishers, news entities, etc.) to Outlook group inboxes so everyone can follow along in one place without the hassle of logging in and out of multiple third-party apps and websites.

Connectors fall into a variety of categories such as:

- **Social media** – Twitter, LinkedIn
- **Interest-based** – Bing News, RSS feeds
- **Project management** – Trello, Asana
- **Email marketing services** – Mailchimp

When you add Office 365 Connectors to your Outlook groups, connector messages are displayed as rich connector cards in your inbox.

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Microsoft Teams.

Microsoft Teams is a secure group chat software that allows Office 365 users to collaborate through chat, online meetings, calls, and web conferencing. The app can be used by teams composed of 10 to 10,000 users, and it can host audio, video, and web conferences. It can even be used for live events. Teams includes:

- Unlimited messages and searches
- Unlimited number of users
- Access for guests
- Web and desktop versions of Microsoft Office
- Microsoft Exchange mail hosting
- A custom email domain
- OneDrive
- SharePoint
- Planner
- Yammer
- Storage of up to 1TB per organization + 10GB per license
- Channel meetings
- Microsoft Stream
- Over 140 integrated apps and services

Most importantly, users can start a Teams conversation from within almost any Office 365 app. If you're making a PowerPoint presentation based on sales figures in an Excel spreadsheet, why leave comments in separate documents when you can have a Teams chat that spans both of them?

Microsoft Stream.

Stream is an enterprise video service integrated with Microsoft 365. Users can upload, access, and share videos securely from across your organization at any time and on any device. Powerful features such as speech-to-text, auto-generated closed captioning, and face detection enable your staff to find unique ways to connect, collaborate, share information, and create engaging interactive content like law webinars and live streaming events.

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Planner.

Planner is a team-centric task manager that makes it easy for your staff to create project plans, organize and assign tasks, share files, share project details, and get updates on progress. The app gives each plan its own board where users can organize tasks into simple drag-and-drop vessels called buckets.

Planner is an excellent way to facilitate visibility and transparency in work output. Using its My Tasks view, your staff members get a comprehensive list of tasks and statuses across all company plans. This app was collaboratively designed with Office 365 in mind, which makes it intuitive, easy to learn, and consistent with Microsoft's signature layouts for ultimate user-friendliness.

Power BI.

Power BI is Microsoft's business analytics service for comprehensive insights to enable fast, informed decisions. It is one of the largest business intelligence platforms in the world, and with Microsoft's industry-leading AI fueling continuous user-driven innovation, Power BI can transform raw data into powerful insights at any scale.

The app is great for your business analysts, your IT team, and your developers. You can turn data into recommendations in lightning speed without compromising security or compliance. Lastly, Power BI allows users to distill big data into high-quality visuals, so you can deliver compelling reports on any platform.

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PowerApps.

You can construct apps in-house and squeeze even more value out of Office 365 with PowerApps. The platform has a convenient point-and-click app design approach, and it lets developers construct apps from a large selection of templates or even from scratch. This isn't just app-building for dummies though, if you have pros on staff. PowerApps has built-in features for connecting to Azure Functions or proprietary/legacy systems.

PowerApps is one of the quickest and simplest ways to create tools that are hyper-specific to your law firm. Its apps run on web, iOS, and Android devices, ensuring connectivity on virtually any device.

Flow.

Flow is an AI-powered application that is best used alongside Microsoft PowerApps. Flow allows app developers to include workflow automation directly into your apps with a no-code approach, allowing end-users to set up simple "If X happens, do Y" functions that work across several apps.

Flow has several templates to choose from, each geared towards specific business components, such as marketing or supply chain. You can create multi-step workflows, so you can eliminate repetitive tasks and free up your employees to work on more important things. For example, you could create a Flow copied from a social media comment on your business's page into a spreadsheet.

Office 365 has something for every law firm.

Maximizing every feature in Office 365 gives you a competitive edge.

But even if you don't intend to use every awesome component, you can certainly find an app that will cater to your firm's needs, whether you need a planner, email organizer, or automated solution. And it will only get better as Microsoft continues to upgrade their cloud platform.

If you're struggling with an **Office 365** migration, or you don't have the time to train employees on new apps, our expert support staff and engineers can help you out. We'll evaluate your needs, recommend a subscription model that works for your requirements and budget, and devise a plan to ensure a seamless migration to the cloud. We'll even provide tips and tricks on how you can make the most out of Office 365.

Managed IT.
Managed Better.

Want to find out if Office 365 is the right fit for your law firm?

Call us today to talk with one of our seasoned consultants.

We're happy to answer your questions, provide recommendations, and audit your current IT network.

Request your initial consultation today!
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