

Aragon Research

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Topics: Content Management, Mobile

Issues: What are the best practices for managing content across the enterprise?

How will enterprises leverage mobile ecosystems to gain a competitive advantage?

Microsoft Revamps Office For the Cloud and Tablet Era

Summary: *On July 16th, 2012, Microsoft announced the preview of Office 2013, Office 365 and all of its flagship Office division products.*

Event: At a press conference in San Francisco, Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer introduced the preview (beta) of the new Office to press and analysts. The preview includes the Office 2013 suite, Office 365, SharePoint, Lync, Exchange, Project and Visio.

Analysis: While Microsoft showed off compelling new versions of its Office products (Office, Lync, SharePoint, etc.), it all centered on the Windows 8 user experience. No mention was made of Office on the iPad, but Aragon Research expects a version of Office to be available on the iPad later this year. One thing the Office team has always delivered is new features that users like, as well as a fairly seamless experience from version to version.

So it is with the new Office. Older documents can be maintained in the older version formats. We were not able to confirm if exact document fidelity is maintained, but Microsoft staff indicated that should be the case.

Cloud-Ready Office Edition

It is clear that the third time is a charm for the cloud version of Office. With the new Office, all signs point to a seamless experience, support for five devices per user and streaming support

for Office apps when someone is using a friend's device that doesn't have Office on it. By saving documents to the cloud, content can be accessed and updated anywhere from any device.

Cloud Delivery to Devices

Microsoft indicated that enterprises and consumers would be able to download Office versions automatically at Office.com, along with what we expect to be multiple packaging options, including a version of Office 2013 that comes with Windows RT tablets. We discussed the Preview with a few customers and this, along with the SharePoint Store, was one of the things they were enthusiastic about.

Office Gets More Social

Microsoft SharePoint is much more social, and the microblogging that creates the activity streams looked fresh and easy. The update of SharePoint is important for the SharePoint user base, but the main use case for SharePoint is still content and document management. In addition to adding social into SharePoint, the ability to connect people through People Cards is provided throughout the Office applications, and can show consolidated activity feeds from sites including Facebook and LinkedIn.

The SharePoint AppStore will be Popular

While it was mentioned almost as an aside, the fact that partner plug-ins for SharePoint will now be available in an online store, as well as in a library for on-premise deployments, means the SharePoint ecosystem just got easier to enhance. While we wonder how easy the store

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will be to 'add' Partner options, this will be something we watch during the Office Preview.

Aragon Advisory: Enterprises need to evaluate the new versions of Office within the context of their Windows planning horizons and the needs of users. In 2012, not everyone needs to have the premium set of office tools.

Enterprises that use Microsoft SharePoint should evaluate the new versions, particularly because of all the new partner solutions that can be accessed.

Bottom Line: Microsoft will have a compelling reason to convince users to migrate to the new Office and Office 365. Since the new version of Office is Cloud ready, that may be the quickest way for enterprises to give their users access.

Although the new Office will run on both Windows 8 and Windows 7, some aspects, particularly touch, are optimized for Windows 8. Since many of the new Office features are focused on the tablet experience, enterprises will have to evaluate Office in the context of their Windows 8 planning horizons, which will be in 2013 and 2014.