Delve into Office 365

Big changes are coming for Microsoft's cloud productivity suite. Have a first look here.

Change Just Ahead

1105 MEDIA
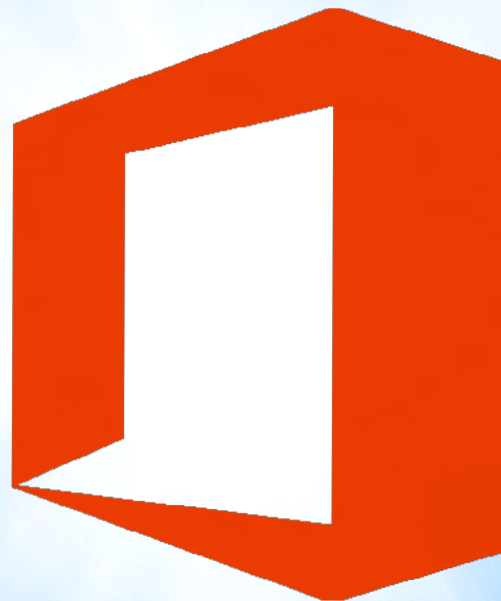
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Microsoft last year called the cloud productivity suite its "most strategic development platform." In 2015, IT will find out exactly what that means with an ambitious rollout of APIs, SDKs, features and initiatives for Office 365.   BY JEFFREY SCHWARTZ

When Satya Nadella last summer sent an e-mail to employees declaring Microsoft as a "productivity and platforms" provider, it had the aura of a new CEO looking to put his own stamp on the company. Never mind that less than two years earlier Nadella's predecessor Steve Ballmer reimagined Microsoft as a "devices and services" provider. A week after Nadella's e-mail, on July 16, he followed the new positioning statement in his first major speech in front of thousands of partners saying Office 365 is the company's "most strategic developer surface area." Left unsaid was that Windows, while also still critical and still receiving enormous focus, was no longer the favored child in Redmond. Now Microsoft is running full speed with the new Office 365 mission.

Actually, Microsoft set the stage for Office 365 to become the flagship Microsoft platform back in March at the company's SharePoint Conference in Las Vegas. It was where Microsoft launched the Office Graph, code-named "Oslo," and promised to unleash a whole new set of APIs and SDKs that would enable the next wave of collaboration. Only in recent months has the significance of these moves started to resonate, even

with those in the development community expected to build on this rapidly growing Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) platform.

APIs and SDKs Arrive

Microsoft released previews of the APIs and SDKs in late October at its TechEd Europe conference in Barcelona. The broader release of the APIs and SDKs, which should arrive early this year, might sound mundane, but they promise to open the Office platform and its components way beyond their traditional boundaries. Company officials demonstrated them, along with potential use cases, for the first time in the United States at SharePoint Live! in November, preparing IT pros and developers for what will be a major upgrade to the Office 365 SharePoint Online service in the new year.

The Office Graph will sow the seeds for Office 365 in 2015 to become the platform that ties various Microsoft mainstays.

The Office Graph with its new Delve front-end and the new APIs will sow the seeds for Office 365 in 2015 to become the platform that ties various Microsoft mainstays—SharePoint, Exchange, Office, and Dynamics, among others, as well as third-party software and SaaS offerings from client and application interfaces as varied as Windows and Xbox to Apple iOS, Android OS, and Salesforce.com.

"From the Office 365 group, they're really putting their foot down on the accelerator with these APIs," said Andrew Connell, a SharePoint MVP, independent contractor and co-chair of the SharePoint Live! track at the Live! 360 conference, produced by 1105 Media Inc., which is Redmond magazine's parent company. "They've really started to open up the platform quite a bit, and what that's allowing them to do, and other companies to do, is to interact and interface my core environment without me having to really do a whole lot of work for my customer."

Ben Curry,
Senior Architect,
Summit 7 Systems

The demos at SharePoint Live! included many of the new and planned APIs and SDKs that aim to drive existing SharePoint on-premises users to the Office 365 SharePoint Online service. Microsoft claims 7 million users subscribe to Office 365, but the company hasn't disclosed how many of them use the service's Exchange Online or

Table 1. *Office 365 Usage Climbs Gradually, but On-Premises SharePoint Still Predominant*

	Office 365/ SharePoint Online	SharePoint 2013	SharePoint 2010	SharePoint 2007
2014	23%	35%	71%	22%
2013	15%	16%	79%	35%
2012	12%*	7%*	81%	50%

*Pre GA
Source: Forrester Research Inc., 2014 Global Usage Surveys August 2012, August 2013 and August 2014 of IT decision makers asked which version of SharePoint they were using. Percentages add up to greater than 100 due to use of multiple versions of SharePoint in a single environment.

> **"They've really started to open up the platform quite a bit."**
>
> *Andrew Connell, Microsoft SharePoint MVP*

SharePoint Online services. It's widely believed that only a small percentage of Office 365 customers currently use SharePoint Online, but that there's pent-up interest in the SharePoint component that could drive significant Office 365 growth.

Incremental Shift

A recent survey by Forrester Research Inc. suggests that usage of Office 365 SharePoint Online by IT departments is increasing incrementally—to about 23 percent in August from 15 percent a year earlier. But those survey respondents seemed to show a stronger preference for the on-premises version, with 35 percent using SharePoint 2013 and 71 percent running SharePoint 2010 (see **Table 1**).

One thing that was clear among attendees and speakers at SharePoint Live! is that while Microsoft would like customers to move to SharePoint Online, they're not expected to go en masse. Besides the known showstoppers for using cloud services—security, regulatory and data sovereignty requirements—even those who don't have those issues can't all pick up and move from SharePoint on-premises and migrate to Office 365. That's especially the case for those with third-party or custom in-house-built apps with trusted code.

"The Exchange part is not a hard thing to do, once you get your authentication configured for cloud," said Ben Curry, senior architect with consultancy Summit 7 Systems. "SharePoint Online is just hard. It's a big, complex problem. If you have hundreds of users you have a lot of work to do before you can just forklift your on-premises [SharePoint server farms] across, and a lot of people do have hundreds of InfoPath forms, because we've given these tools to the business and we've let them create their own forms. The same with workflows. They've been using SharePoint designer to create workflows on-premises, and we have these mid-tier processes automated. You're going to have to find every single one of these."

Customers using SharePoint on-premises with its Business Connectivity Services (BCS) connectors to line-of-business (LOBs)

applications, forms and those with e-mail-enabled lists and processes will also be hard-pressed to perform a simple migration to Office 365, Curry added. "A lot of third-party providers do have apps in the app store or will work with Office 365, but if you're developing your own, or if you have your own custom solutions, if they're not written using the app model, you're not going to get them up into Office 365," he said.

Pushing the New App Model

Because that's a limitation Office 365 can't change, Microsoft is hoping to lure customers by making it easy for developers to build similar versions of their applications using its Office 365 app store model in addition to easing hybrid deployments. In the

At a Glance: The New Face of Office 365

- **App Launcher:** Apps that register as Office 365 applications in Azure Active Directory will be in the Office 365 App Launcher and My Apps page. This will make these apps available throughout Office 365.

- **My Apps:** Users can extend applications including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Project, SharePoint, and Outlook and ultimately third-party applications via the App Launcher, which users and administrators can customize.

- **Connectivity to Office 365 Services:** Adding on to Users and Groups, new services and datasets include Files, Mail, Calendar and Contacts, all of which will have centralized authentication via Azure Active Directory, enabling apps to request multiple levels of access to user information in Office 365.

- **APIs to Open the Office 365 Platform:** The newly released Office 365 APIs are all RESTful services, allowing connectivity to other services and platforms. Among them are Skype for Business, Yammer Share button, SharePoint Encryption at rest. In preview are Delve and Office Graph and Groups.

- **Native SDKs:** For quicker connectivity, native SDKs for iOS, Cordova and Xamarin available with Android are in the works, enabling native resources of those platforms to consume Office 365 services.

- **File Extensions:** Microsoft's new way of letting third parties build support for other file formats making it possible to natively interact with third-party files, such as CAD.

- **Hover Cards:** An Outlook tool that brings contact data from multiple sources to provide quicker and better interaction with various contact information types.

opening keynote of SharePoint Live!, Microsoft Office 365 Product Manager Sonya Koptyev explained the major changes coming to Office 365 and its new cloud development model. While she declined to reveal the number of Office 365 SharePoint Online accounts, Koptyev said since the launch two years ago, there are more than 3 million Office and SharePoint developers, 1,200 apps in the Office 365 app store—one-third of which are paid apps—and more than 400PB of data.

Koptyev explained the focus now is to extend all of Office across platforms and endpoints, hence the driving effort to offer new APIs and SDKs beyond the use of Visual Basic, COM add-ins, Visual Studio Tools for Office (VSTO) and even more modern full-trust code, she explained. Now the emphasis is on open standards and REST interfaces, the Web, and all major mobile platforms. "We are no longer just the Microsoft stack focusing solely on Windows and Windows devices. We're also opening up to other developers in the Android and iOS space making Office 365 the platform to plug into from these various technologies," she said. "We [now] have the ability for you to plug in and connect to Office 365 using our RESTful APIs, making it accessible to native devices, Web applications, and also to your own apps that might be running locally somewhere on-premises that you'd like to plug into Office 365."

"We're also opening up to other developers in the Android and iOS space making Office 365 the platform to plug into from these various technologies."

Sonya Koptyev, Product Manager, Office 365, Microsoft

App Launcher and My Apps

Earlier last year, but prior to the TechEd Europe release, Microsoft started making it possible to plug into your users and groups that were in Office 365 via its Microsoft Azure cloud service. Using the tools available, Microsoft stack developers were able to access Office 365 through the Microsoft .NET Framework platform via HTML and JavaScript and to plug into Azure as the authorization platform. The most visible part of the newest forthcoming release is the App Launcher, which includes a customizable interface called My Apps.

"This is one launch pad for Office 365 where you can get to not only the out-of-the-box apps such as Word, Excel and PowerPoint, but also custom apps that you can build and pull from the store and put right into your Office 365 environment," Koptyev said. She pointed to the recent release of the Files, Mail, Calendar and Contacts APIs that developers can use to plug those components of Office 365 into
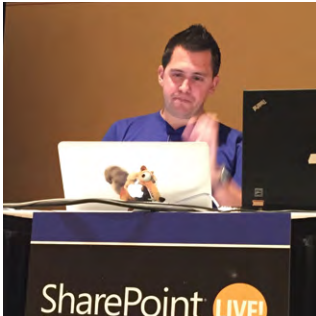
their native or Web applications. In addition, Microsoft announced SDKs for iOS, Android, Cordova and Xamarin (all are on GitHub). "That's some really exciting news, given where we came from and just the short time that it's taken us to really open up the platform to become available to all developers across the board on all technologies," she said.

Asked if the App Launcher/My Apps interface would appear in the on-premises versions of Office, she said that's still under review. Microsoft Office 365 Senior Product Manager Jeremy Thake, who gave a subsequent session at SharePoint Live!, elaborated, saying Microsoft currently doesn't plan to do so because it's currently tied to Azure Active Directory. "There is some talk the Azure units that are running it on-premises essentially might work, but we are treating that as a hybrid scenario," Thake said. "The notion moving forward with My Apps is it will work for a hybrid scenario, so if you have Office 365 and you have a SharePoint server on-premises, if you configured the SharePoint server to work with Azure Active Directory as an ADFS approach, all of that will work together. We are in the process of running guidance on that hybrid setup, but right now, My Apps is very much specific to Office 365."

Office Everywhere Strategy

Despite the fact Microsoft introduced the app model to Office 365 with the launch of the SharePoint online component two years ago, Thake acknowledged in a presentation at SharePoint Live! that it has yet to take hold, but he remains confident the move from trusted code to device, application and platform portability will become popular. "In the past you used VSTO to extend Office or you have used full-trust code or sandbox solutions in SharePoint to extend SharePoint. With this new app model approach, what we're essentially saying is we want to extend it everywhere," he said. "When I say everywhere, I mean everywhere."

This change is strategically important to Microsoft because it will impact how the company sees its "Office everywhere" effort extending the platform and its usage. By having all of these API endpoints to tap into, such as Files, Mail, Calendar and Contacts, as well as the presentations, documents and spreadsheets, and taking, for example, Word automation services that now require the SharePoint server, soon the cloud will be a new endpoint, Thake explained.

"The notion moving forward with My Apps is it will work for a hybrid scenario."

Jeremy Thake,
Senior Product Manager,
Office 365, Microsoft

Figure 1. *My Apps will appear in the new Office 365 App Launcher.*

"Things you do at a server level, you cannot do in Office 365."

*Geoff Varosky,
Senior Architect,
BlueMetal Architects*

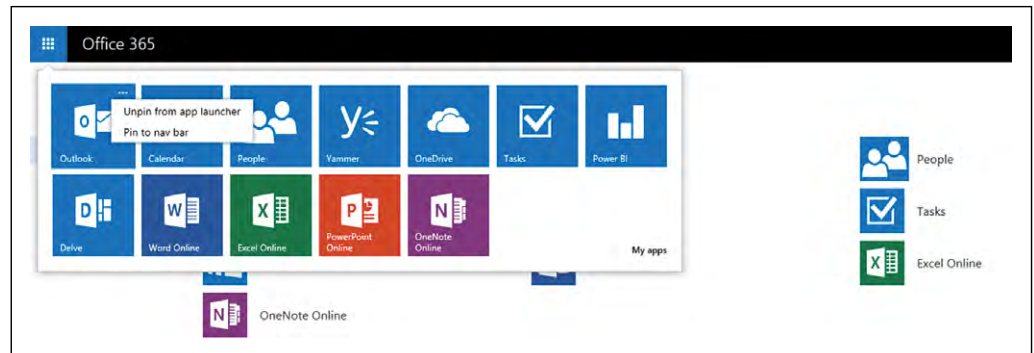"For instance, I can throw a Word doc, which is a .DOCX format with that API, and it might be returning back an .XPS [Excel] document or it might be turning back a PDF, or I could call the API, give it a URL to a file that lives in OneDrive for Business and just add this one slide to it," he said. "That means I don't have to steam that document down, modify a document with OpenXML, and then reupload a document. I let you just call the API endpoint, and go to that document over there, just adding one slide at this point in the day."

Other APIs that will cross platforms and endpoints include Skype, where within Web mobile device applications, you'll be able to interact with Skype (and Lync, which Microsoft is rebranding Skype for Business). Similarly, there are APIs in preview for OneNote and Yammer. "As an example, the OneNote API is great from a consumer perspective, where you can manipulate OneNote files that live in the OneDrive consumer version," Thake said. "What we will have early [this] year is that ability with OneNote in OneDrive for Business, where you get at it from the same way from the same API endpoint. So we're really growing this ability."

The App Launcher that will house My Apps will show up in the Office 365 task bar, making it possible to launch Outlook features including Contacts and Calendars. Users can pin and unpin apps and capabilities as they see fit (see **Figure 1**).

Koptyev demonstrated how that might be used with a prototype of a hotel property manager managing properties with Office 365 and SharePoint, where lists and details about each property housed in SharePoint were accessible on an iPad. With the manager walking

around, he could inspect various properties or facilities and record incidents or needed repairs by tapping into a workflow component to handle that process utilizing the various Office 365 services such as Contacts and the Calendar.

In the not-to-distant future, developers will be able to extend a core component of the new Office Graph, Delve (see "First Look: Delve into Hidden Enterprise Content," p. 10), the video portal, Yammer and One Drive for Business and create custom apps as they had for the traditional Office environment. The Office Graph API, which brings visibility to actual objects and pulls Office 365 metadata and objects, is in early preview, but will be key to the Office 365 release wave.

Microsoft is lifting constraints that have required the use of the Office file formats.

Microsoft is also lifting constraints that have required the use of the Office file formats. File Extensions are the company's way of letting third parties build support for other file formats, making it possible to natively interact with third-party files, such as CAD. Also new are Hover Cards, available in Outlook 2013, which bring contact data from multiple sources to provide quicker and better interaction with various contact information types. In Office 365, Hover Cards aim to expand the contextual experiences of Outlook. For example, if the text of a message suggests having a meeting, it will be able to contextually create a meeting request.

Impact on IT Pros

While this is just a synopsis of what's coming to Office 365 this year, rest assured, Microsoft has big plans for it. Developers will certainly be key in bringing the platform forward, but it will ultimately impact IT operations, as well, meaning some new levels of flexibility in some cases and limitations in others. For example, while IT pros will still be able to manage permissions and other deployment functions through Azure Active Directory, moving to Office 365 will have its share of restrictions from an administrative perspective compared with SharePoint on-premises, said Geoff Varosky, a senior architect with BlueMetal Architects.

**Dan Usher,
Lead Associate,
Booz Allen Hamilton**

"Things you do at a server level, you cannot do in Office 365," Varosky said. "Mostly back-end things you're going to access either through PowerShell or through central administration are not available in Office 365. You get a little slice, you can access things like the user profile service and configure InfoPath, and configure Business Connectivity Services and things like that through Office 365 for the SharePoint Online tenant administrator. But you cannot get to all of the other fun stuff," such as alternate mappings and claims-based authentication for custom providers, though he questioned the wisdom of the latter.

Organizations with SharePoint server customizations who want to use Office 365 will have to plan on managing hybrid deployments, which most agree will be the norm for larger organizations. "It would make sense if you have highly developed applications that your on-premises deployment just becomes like an applications server for your intranet and business intelligence platform, and all of these other things you can do with SharePoint," Varosky said.

For many organizations, an early introduction to Office 365 could come via OneDrive for Business.

OneDrive for Business

For many organizations, an early introduction to Office 365 could come via OneDrive for Business. It's the cloud repository for SharePoint 2013 and Office 365 and currently gives each user up to 1TB of capacity. Later this year, Microsoft will offer unlimited capacity. Daniel Usher, a lead associate at consultancy Booz Allen Hamilton Inc., said that's a compelling option for organizations eager to rid themselves of their file shares. It's also an alternative to e-mail attachments where instead the message has a URL mapping to the content.

Usher also predicts OneDrive for Business will become the repository for Yammer content, which as noted Microsoft is already tying to Office 365. "They've taken Yammer and they started integrating it in so you can have conversations around documents," Usher said. "If you share documents from your OneDrive for Business, the hope is all of a sudden you'll be using OneDrive for Business inside of Yammer instead of using something else. That's just my gut feeling they're going to go that way. What Microsoft, does, we'll see." R

Jeffrey Schwartz is editor of **Redmond***.*

Top 10 Free Tools

for Change Auditing and Password Management

Track changes to Active Directory, Exchange, file servers, manage passwords and troubleshoot account lockouts at absolutely no cost.

The following freeware tools by Redmond Reader's Choice Awards winner Netwrix Corporation can save you a lot of time and make your network more efficient – at absolutely no cost. Some of these tools have advanced commercial versions with additional features, but none of them will expire and stop working when you urgently need them.

1. Change Notifier for Active Directory
(reviewed by Redmond Magazine: http://url2open.com/R1)

Tracks changes to Active Directory (AD) users, group memberships, OUs, permissions, and provides visibility into what's happening inside your AD. This freeware tool is a winner of multiple awards from Redmond Magazine and Windows IT Pro Magazine.
Download link: http://url2open.com/F1

2. Change Notifier for Group Policy

Tracks every change made to your group policy objects (GPOs), including GPO links, audit policy, password policy, and software deployment changes, and fills major gaps found in native auditing tools.
Download link: http://url2open.com/F2

3. Account Lockout Examiner
(reviewed by itsmdaily.com: http://url2open.com/R3)

Alerts on account lockouts, helps troubleshoot these events, and analyzes their potential causes. The accounts can be unlocked via Netwrix Account Lockout Examiner console or mobile device.
Download link: http://url2open.com/F3

4. Change Notifier for Exchange

Reports on what's happening inside your Exchange servers, and tracks both configuration and permission changes with "before" and "after" values.
Download link: http://url2open.com/F4

5. Password Expiration Notifier
(reviewed by freedownloadscenter.com: http://url2open.com/R5)

Automatically reminds your users to change their passwords before they expire so you can avoid password reset calls. It works nicely for users who don't log on interactively and never receive standard password change reminders at logon time (e.g., VPN users).
Download link: http://url2open.com/F5

6. Change Notifier for File Servers

Tracks changes to files and shares permissions, detects deleted and newly-created files, and reports on file-access attempts. This freeware tool strengthens security of your Windows-based file servers.
Download link: http://url2open.com/F6

7. Password Manager

Allows users to reset forgotten passwords and unlock their accounts through a convenient, web-based, self-service portal and integration with the standard Windows logon procedure.
Download link: http://url2open.com/F7

8. Change Notifier for SQL Server

Detects changes made to your SQL Server configurations, including database creation and deletion, changes to database users, roles, and schemas. It also reports "before" and "after" values for every change, and sends daily reports showing all changes made.
Download link: http://url2open.com/F8

9. Change Notifier for VMware

Allows you to control changes in your virtual environments. It notifies you about changes to VMware virtual machine settings, creation and deletion of virtual machines. It also reports "before" and "after" values for every change, and sends daily reports showing all changes made in the last 24 hours.
Download link: http://url2open.com/F9

10 Change Notifier for Windows Server

Alerts you about changes made to your Windows Server configurations, including installed software and hardware, services and scheduled tasks. It sends change summary reports listing changes made in the last 24 hours with "before" and "after" values.
Download link: http://url2open.com/F10

JOHN BAGLEY

Award-winning professional writer and independent consultant

FIRST LOOK:

Delve into
HIDDEN
Enterprise Content

A key new feature in the pending Microsoft Office 365 revamp, Delve will let users discover and share information with colleagues. BY MAGGIE SWEARINGEN

Delve puts employees at the center of all the content within their Office 365 environments.

Office Delve is perhaps the most important new feature in a major upgrade coming to the Microsoft Office 365 service this year. That's because Delve puts employees at the center of all the content within their Office 365 environments, making it possible for them to share and discover content—even information they might not otherwise know exists. Some even call it a stalker tool for its ability to let people keep tabs of files and discover who's accessing and editing them.

Microsoft unveiled Delve as "Codename Oslo" last year at its SharePoint Conference in Las Vegas (**bit.ly/1kY0Ffu**). Delve provides the first taste of the power of the larger Microsoft Office Graph technology—a personalized experience that will draw content from the entire suite of Office 365 applications. Initially Delve will pull from e-mail, SharePoint Online, Yammer and OneDrive for

Figure 1. *The "cards" within the Office Delve UI give a Pinterest-like look and feel.*

Microsoft officially calls each Delve component "cards," but let's call it like it is: Pinterest for Office 365.

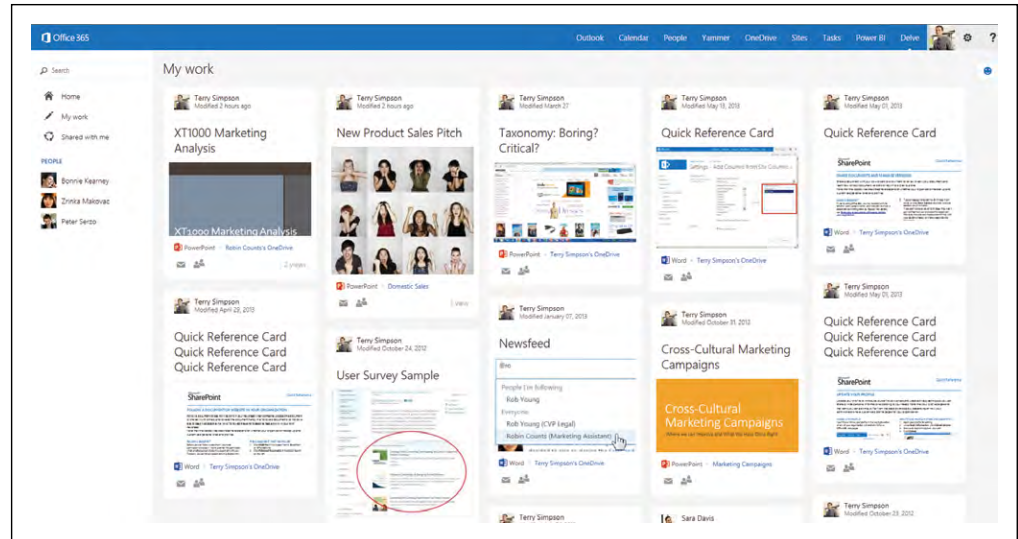Business. The latter serves as the data store for Office 365 and SharePoint. Later in the year, Microsoft will add support for message attachments, OneNote and Lync.

Delve doesn't just simply aggregate content, it prioritizes and pushes content based on clues (or in Microsoft-speak, "signals") it receives from user relationships, activity, conversations and even e-mail traffic from within the Office 365 environment.

Microsoft began rolling out Delve to its Office 365 customers in September and it expects most Office 365 customers to see Delve early this year—if they haven't already opted-in for the early release.

Inside the Interface

First, can Pinterest (finally) be given the credit it deserves for creating an intuitive UI that UX designers world-over (including yours truly) have copied? Case in point: the Delve Pinterest-like design—Microsoft officially calls each Delve component "cards," but let's call it like it is: Pinterest for Office 365 (see **Figure 1**).

The UI is fresh and extremely simple to understand. The left-hand navigation allows users to search and sort for content and connect with fellow colleagues via their Delve home screens. Screen captures
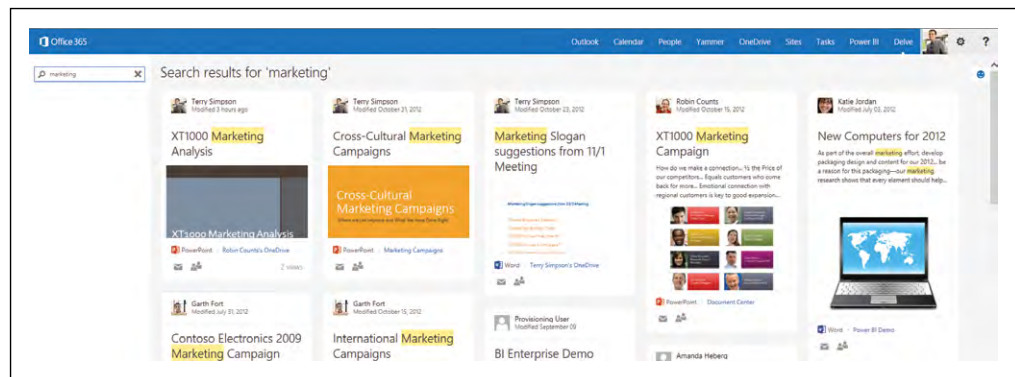
Figure 2. *Cards provide visual representation of the document, video or presentation metadata found after performing a specific search.*

Not only can you access documents and locations directly from the card view, but users can also e-mail links and discover who's accessing and sharing documents.

and graphics around the Internet hint at the left navigation adding more tools and sorting features as additional Office Graph features make their way into Office 365. For now, though, users have limited but clear choices.

Navigation and Filtering

It bears noting that it takes Delve a while to get going. The first time a user visits the Delve Home, he's greeted with a friendly message: "It's lonely in here. You get more out of Delve when you and your colleagues store and share documents in OneDrive for Business or Sites in Office 365. Learn more." This lets the user know that Delve is turned on and working, but it might be a while before his home is completely populated.

If the user has any SharePoint documents or other content in One Drive for Business, it should appear in the My Work section in minutes. Home and Shared with Me seem to take significantly longer to populate. Organizations not actively using SharePoint Online will be disappointed in the content returned here—in addition to One Drive for Business, SharePoint Online is currently one of the premier content sources for Delve.

The "cards" in the center of the screen are the real focus. They offer a visual representation of the basic document, video or presentation metadata in an easy to digest format. Content is surfaced and prioritized based on the clues from user's recent interactions.

Though no one can say for sure the clues Delve continues to gather, as I interact with my Office 365 environment I know it looks at recent e-mail traffic with colleagues, recent document interaction, and the recent document activities of my close colleagues or team members. In the future, signals gathered from Lync and OneNote will impact content, too. I searched for "marketing" from my Delve Home (see **Figure 2**, page 12) and my top results included:

- The recent marketing documents I modified
- Marketing documents from users I recently started following
- Content from sites I'd visited recently

Delve doesn't currently include any preview feature for documents or PowerPoint files.

At the very least it certainly makes searching for a user's documents across multiple applications easier than in the past.

Not only can you access documents and locations directly from the card view, but users can also e-mail links and view who's accessing and sharing documents.

Despite the preview feature being so heavily touted in SharePoint search results, Delve doesn't currently include any preview feature for documents or PowerPoint files. Because the functionality is possible, and the underlying technology connected, it's hard to imagine this isn't coming soon, but the fact that it wasn't there from the outset seems a bit surprising.

People Can Confuse

The People tab on the left-hand navigation confused me at first. Why these particular people were displayed in my navigation—and not all of the other umpteen million other people I'm following—wasn't immediately clear to me. And the fact that every time I came back to my Delve Home the list was slightly different, I was left scratching my head.

After driving myself crazy trying to figure out the significance of any of these people at any given point in time, I searched for an answer, where I found the following from Delve Support (**bit.ly/1xYaDGw**):

"Below the list of views, on the left, you see some of the people you're connected to in the organization or people you work with

across teams. The list of people will change over time based on your activities, such as who you exchange the most e-mails with. This list gives you a quick way to find content related to your colleagues."

The power of the People list really lies with our interactions at any given time with certain colleagues. In my case I was following all three people listed in my people list, and two of them were recent collaborators.

Click on anyone from the list and you're taken to his People page. At first glance the People page looks similar to your Delve Home except it has a banner at the top identifying the person with whom it's associated. It sounds simple, right?

Not really. It's critical to remember this is your Delve. You're seeing this person through your own lens. Take the documents you're seeing, for example. This person probably has hundreds of other documents he's working with in the Office 365 environment. This is merely the subset to which you have access.

> **The power of the People list really lies with our interactions at any given time with certain colleagues.**

See What's Trending

Delve also gauges the content that's trending with that person, regardless of access rights (see **Figure 3**). The content is listed on his People page. It seems completely unintuitive, but it's important to remember two things:

1. If this person is showing up in your People list it's reasonable to assume you have a close working relationship and are collaborating on similar material.

2. Delve is taking into account everything that's happening in Office 365. If several of your colleagues are collaborating on a document, and it's not security trimmed, then it's worth assuming that this document is being "recommended" to this user.
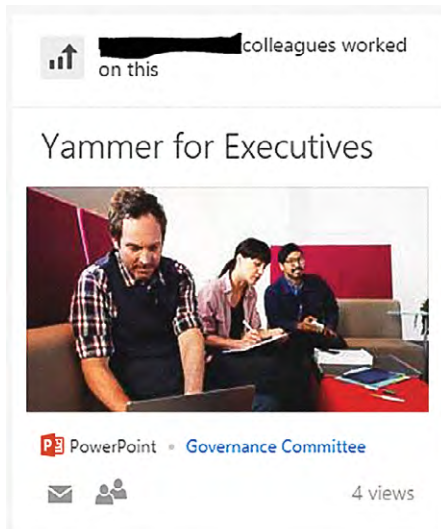
After I finally got used to the idea I approached "trending" as my view into what is recommended for this person. It was up to me to decide if I should take the next step and give him access to that content.

Figure 3. *Using Delve, users can gauge the number of people viewing an Office 365 file.*

More than the initial interface and interaction with documents, I struggled with the People functionality. Once I got over the fact that I would never fully understand how this list was generated at any given time, I was still thrown by the notion that the People page for a user and his Profile page on Sites weren't connected. Though I could start a Lync chat or send an e-mail directly from the People page interface, I couldn't follow a user, or get his full contact information. Unintuitive, at best, this oddity could be a real point of frustration for less patient users.

Security Considerations

Users worried about its potential to expose confidential information can turn off Delve. Delve settings allow a user to hide activities from others. People can still see you, but your activities and relationships aren't leveraged by Office Graph to personalize the experience for colleagues.

Users worried about its potential to expose confidential information can turn off Delve.

Delve documentation repeats over and over that it doesn't change existing permissions on documents. Misunderstanding and misuse of SharePoint permissions structures are often obscured by the complexity of SharePoint implementations. Though it's not unheard of to navigate to an incorrectly permissioned library by accident, or turn up a supposedly confidential document in search, it's not known to happen often (of course one time on an HR document is one time too many). SharePoint implementations are too vast for the often-hurried user to really bother with anything other than specifically what they need at a given moment. With Delve, the user is suddenly served content on a silver platter.

Providing your SharePoint permissions structures are sound, monitored and frequently audited, this isn't a problem, it's a welcome addition to the Office 365 experience. If not, though, organizations have a serious problem.

If your organization wants to take advantage of Delve (and, really, it should), you need to first map out a roll out plan that includes not only SharePoint security auditing, but also clear training about sharing and permissions as they relate to Office Graph technologies.

The Upshot

The SharePoint-geeky side of me was pretty excited the first time I saw the Office Graph demo. Office Graph, and Delve by extension, could be a big step toward the Holy Grail of SharePoint user adoption. An interface where I can quickly get to all the documents on which I've collaborated across SharePoint Sites? Check. A search that's specifically tuned to me and cuts out all the other white noise? Sign me up.

But, because Delve is only the first part of a suite of tools, to take full advantage you need an Office 365 environment that's extremely active (for example, your company going completely to the cloud). Without that level of activity and change there's just not enough material in Delve for most users to offer any compelling reason to keep returning. Add that to the fact that hybrid Delve solutions are still baking, and it might be a while before the potential of Delve is fully realized.

In many ways Delve can help organizations struggling with social business to be social without really trying. The nature of connectivity and (dare I say) synergy is suddenly at our disposal—an entire network driven by the common actions of users, but bolstered by the intelligence of technology. Suddenly we're social just by doing our jobs—not doing our jobs and telling people about it—Delve does that part for us. **R**

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Office Graph could be a big step toward the Holy Grail of SharePoint user adoption.