

THE INSIGHTS

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Welcome to your October update

October is Cybersecurity Awareness month and to mark the occasion this edition is packed full of news and updates that will help you enhance your security, compliance and governance strategies.



News

- Microsoft is named a Leader in the 2024 Gartner Magic Quadrant™ for Endpoint Protection Platforms



Copilot updates

- Chat & collaborate with Copilot agents in SharePoint



Productivity updates

- New features in SharePoint Advanced Management



Security updates

- Enable MFA for your tenant before October 15, 2024



Azure updates

- Extra discount on Linux VMs until March 2025



MICROSOFT NEWS

Microsoft is named a Leader in the 2024 Gartner® Magic Quadrant™ for Endpoint Protection Platforms

Since 2023, Microsoft have observed a 2.75x increase in ransomware campaigns, with up to 90% of these attacks targeting unmanaged endpoints. However, Microsoft Defender for Endpoint has successfully reduced the rate of successful ransomware attacks by more than three times during the same period.

As a result, Microsoft has been named a Leader in the 2024 Gartner® Magic Quadrant™ for Endpoint Protection Platforms. This achievement highlights Microsoft's ongoing commitment to protecting your endpoints and enhancing the efficiency of your security operations.

Cybersecurity Awareness Month - securing our world together

Cybersecurity jobs are more challenging than ever. It's not just increased speed, scale, and sophistication of cyberattacks that make cybersecurity jobs harder: there are 250 new regulatory updates to be tracked every day, cybersecurity teams have a disconnected collection of fragmented tools that they are expected to seamlessly stitch together and manage, and the cybersecurity workforce gap has reached a record high, with 4 million professionals needed to adequately secure organisations.

Globally, the cybersecurity workforce gap has widened this year, with four million roles left unfilled in 2023—a nearly 13% year-on-year increase. Still, security is the most important investment we can make, especially as AI reshapes the world.

Security and governance have become a team sport

In today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, security and governance have truly become a team sport. The practice of data governance is not just about technology. It starts with people and processes. Without a clear vision, strategy, and roadmap, organisations often struggle to align stakeholders, define roles, and communicate the benefits of data governance across the organisation. This can result in low adoption and resistance to change.

The latest innovations in Microsoft Purview and Microsoft Fabric, designed to help customers secure, govern, and manage their complex data estates in the AI era. This seamless solution turns data security, governance, and compliance into a team sport to effectively address the converging trends across the scale and sophistication of data threats, increasing regulations, ever-expanding data estate and the acceleration of AI adoption within the business.



MICROSOFT COPILOT

Copilot agents in SharePoint

Use [Copilot agents](#) to collaborate with colleagues and interrogate data in real-time. Working with specific SharePoint sites, your Copilot agent will quickly find the answers you need to help you get the job done.

Copilot in Excel With Python

This update enables you to conduct advanced analysis, using natural language to perform the task. Copilot will automatically generate, explain, and insert Python code into your Excel spreadsheet. Copilot in Excel with Python also renders stunning visuals that were previously not possible or were difficult to create. Unique visuals like heatmaps, pairplots, multiplots, and violin plots help you understand and communicate your analysis

Copilot in Outlook: prioritise my inbox

We all struggle with email overload. Now, with Prioritize my inbox, Copilot in Outlook helps you quickly get to the messages that matter, analysing your inbox based on both the content of your email and the context of your role—like who you report to and the email threads where you've been responsive.

Copilot in PowerPoint: narrative builder

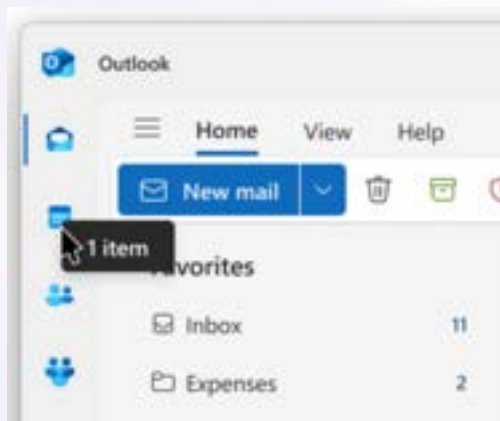
Narrative builder in Microsoft PowerPoint helps you work with Copilot like a partner, iterating together to build a great first draft in minutes while keeping you in control of the creative process. Copilot uses your prompt to build an outline with topics that you can edit and refine to create a first draft of your presentation. Soon, you'll be able to add files to the outline to ground your topics.



How ready are you for Microsoft Copilot?
Score your organisation's readiness with our
[online self-assessment.](#)



PRODUCTIVITY



Drag emails to create an event

This update allows users to drag and drop emails into the Calendar icon on the left app bar of Microsoft Outlook to create an event.

Device hardware inventory is coming soon to Microsoft Intune

The enhanced device inventory capabilities for Windows devices will provide key information to help IT pros answer questions vital to understanding your environment, targeting devices, making business decisions, and maintaining data security.

Here are a few examples:

- Do your devices have TPM 2.0?
- Are your devices ready to update from Windows 10 to Windows 11?
- Are device batteries nearing end-of-life and can you schedule service to maintain productivity?

New features in SharePoint Advanced Management

SharePoint Advanced Management (Add-On Licence) is a suite of features designed to help simplify data governance and hygiene in Microsoft 365, enhancing both your security posture and your Copilot experience.

Microsoft have launched several new features to help customers keep sensitive data secure and prep for generative AI by identifying overshared content, enabling AI focused access controls, and enabling easier removal of irrelevant content.

- Permission state report
- AI driven semantic matching of sites
- Site ownership policy
- Restricted Content Discovery
- Restricted Site Creation
- Inactive SharePoint sites policy
- Data Access Governance report on content shared with 'Everyone except external users' in last 28 days



MICROSOFT SECURITY

Block a user for your organisation

Admins can now set up a list of users that are blocked from collaborating with their organization. If a user is added to the block list, your organization will not be able to have 1:1 and group chats with these users. If chats already exist before a user is added to the block list, the blocked user will be removed from the chat.

This feature is turned off by default.

Enable multifactor authentication for your tenant before October 15, 2024

Starting on or after October 15, 2024, to further increase security, Microsoft will require admins to use multi-factor authentication (MFA) when signing into the Microsoft Azure portal, Microsoft Entra admin center, and Microsoft Intune admin center.

Full Announcement: [MFA enforcement for Microsoft Entra admin center sign-in coming soon – Microsoft Community Hub](#)



Increase in meeting passcodes length for added security

Given the recent global security threats on online meetings, Microsoft Teams is taking steps to make your meetings more secure. We are increasing the minimum length of the meeting passcodes from 6 characters to 8 characters. The nature of the passcodes will remain the same, consisting of letters and numbers. This update will not impact any usage of Teams meetings within your organization, as typically users will click on meeting links or on the meetings on their calendars. Only the users – within or outside of your organization – who join the meetings with a Meeting ID and passcode will be impacted by this change. They will have to enter a longer passcode after this update rolls out.



MICROSOFT AZURE

Extra discount on Linux VMs until March 2025

Microsoft have announced an extra 15% discount on Linux VMs in Azure when you commit to one or three years. This means you could save up to 56% compared to running these VMs on a pay-as-you-go basis. The offer is available from the 1st of October 2024 to the 31st of March 2025.

Ensuring your spend is optimised across Azure is a time-consuming task. Our experts ensure that you are always utilising the latest promotions to make the most of your investment. If you are unsure whether this promotion is right for you, email our experts at enterprise@focusgroup.co.uk.

Microsoft launches Azure Cobalt 100 CPU

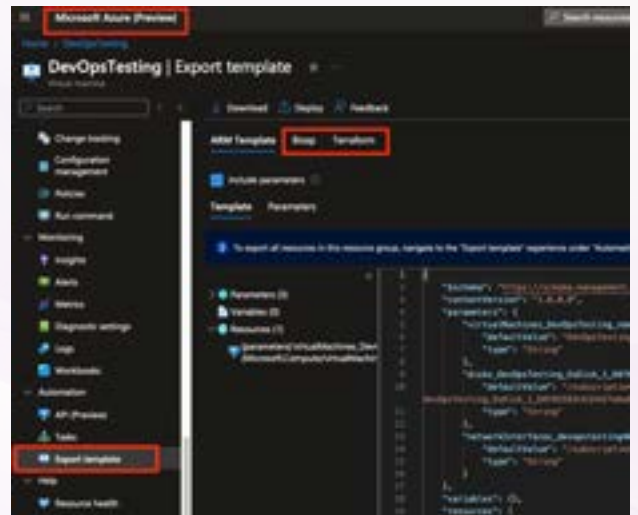
These VMs run on Microsoft's first 64-bit Arm-based Azure Cobalt 100 CPU, which has been fully designed in-house. They represent a significant milestone in Microsoft's journey in designing and building out their own cloud infrastructure, with optimisation and customisation across every layer of the infrastructure stack—from silicon, to servers, to services.

Terraform is becoming more widely available in Azure

Microsoft Fabric now has a Terraform provider so that you can deploy, manage and govern your environment through Infrastructure as Code.

This update means you can leverage code and automation to make changes at speed and scale while minimising the risk of human error.

As well as this, you can now also export resources from the Azure portal in Terraform and Bicep, although this is currently in preview. This is great news if you're a Terraform house as Microsoft is making it easier to deploy through infrastructure-as-code.



Retirements

- Azure Automanage Best Practices retires end of September 2027, use Azure Policy instead
- VPNGw1-5 (non AZ) migrate at the end of September 2026
- SQL Data Sync retires end of September 2027
- Both Python 3.9 & PHP 8.2 are being phased out for Azure application services. Python in October 2024 and PHP in December 2024.