

Office 365 @ WCU – Tools Supporting Learning and Increased Mobility

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Microsoft Office 365 - often shortened to “O365” - is a mobile- and Web-enabled suite of Office applications including email, OneDrive storage, and many other related services. At WCU, we have long used Microsoft services including Exchange for email and calendar and SharePoint for intranet services. We also use Windows operating systems for servers and end-user computers, and Office tools for user productivity. As part of the campus licensing agreement with Microsoft, WCU has made select O365 services available for the campus community for several years.

Recently, IS&T assembled teams to evaluate a broader rollout of cloud office solutions that would support enhanced digital workplace productivity. The team consulted with independent industry experts and compared different cloud office solutions. We learned that as vendors focus on improvements to their cloud office solutions, features will begin to lag in on-premise versions. It also became clear that O365 has dominant market share with 90% of the \$15.4 billion enterprise office suite market, and has been number one going back as far as rankings have been kept according to independent sources. In addition, O365 is the only cloud office solution that meets the PASSHE data security and compliance requirements for cloud storage needs.

With all of this considered, IS&T believes that the time has come for a broader rollout of O365 at WCU. In the belief that support for devices of all types is crucial to success, our teams have tested the integration of different O365 services with multiple computer and mobile operating systems (Windows, MacOS, iOS and Android) and other major existing systems used on campus including SharePoint, Learning Management System (D2L), ERP (SAP), and Exchange (email).

A number of O365 services are now available for use by the campus community including OneDrive file storage, which offers 5 TB (that’s 5,000 GB), and web and desktop versions of Word, Excel, PowerPoint, OneNote and Outlook which are available to install on your computer or use online. O365 Pro-Plus add-on licenses allow for the installation of O365 ProPlus on up to 5 PCs or Macs per user as well as 5 mobile devices or tablets. **O365 storage and apps are available to all WCU matriculated students, faculty and staff today.**

Students can be more productive in and out of the classroom because Office apps work on the mobile devices they use all day, every day. We know that students often start their work on a phone and finish it on another device, such as a laptop. So, having all the Office 365 apps available on different platforms is a huge benefit and mobility boost that students love. It’s a seamless experience in mobile productivity and the sync experience between devices has been great. The employees will also start enjoying these benefits as part of the hardware refresh of

institutionally owned devices and can also use these services on their personal devices. Throughout 2018, we plan on making additional O365 services available like Skype for Business for video conferencing, Sway for digital storytelling, and Microsoft Teams that integrates the conversations, content, and apps you need to be more collaborative and engaged. The long-term goals include migration to Exchange Online for email and Sharepoint Online.

Universities are about preparing for the future, and we are excited about the future of O365 at WCU. Not only will students have the chance to use the communications and collaboration technology they will likely use once they graduate, but everyone has the same opportunity to take those tools and achieve their personal best.

