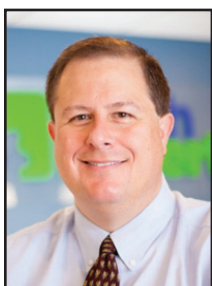# The Latest Expansions To Office 365 Will WOW You!

*Thomas Fox is president of Tech Experts, southeast Michigan's leading small business computer support company.*

The availability of productivity apps is astounding. Basic word processors that were the desktop staple haven't been replaced, but have evolved from requiring installation from a CD-ROM to not even requiring a downloaded program file anymore!

Yes, Microsoft Word, the workplace word processing darling, is accessible online through subscription-based Microsoft Office 365, which has a multitude of integrated apps designed for the flexible workforce.

Create documents in Microsoft Word or spreadsheets in Microsoft Excel and save them to SharePoint or OneDrive, send emails through Microsoft Outlook, design innovative presentations with PowerPoint, and the list goes on.

The list of apps that integrate with Office 365 expands every day! Considering Microsoft Office 365 now includes Microsoft Teams and Microsoft Flow, the possibilities are incredible. If you've not yet experienced either of these apps, you're truly missing out.

## Microsoft Teams

Microsoft was rumored to be interested in acquiring the techie-favorite collaborative platform Slack in 2016, but instead, released Microsoft Teams in 2017 as an updated and improved alternative to its Skype for Business.

Microsoft viewed its Teams release as everything users loved about Slack and a "fix" to those areas where Slack wasn't sufficient. Was Slack for sale? Probably not.

But it didn't matter – Microsoft decided to invest in a proprietary solution rather than re-do someone else's established product. The even better news with this decision?

Complete compatibility with the full family of Microsoft products is guaranteed, and integration with productivity apps!

## Microsoft Flow

Do you love rules in Microsoft Outlook? If a new email comes in, is from a specific sender, includes a group of words in the subject line, or is from a specified domain, then treat the email with a certain process – the same way, every time.

Whether this is forwarding to someone else, deleting the email, or moving to a folder to organize messages, the process will remain the same until the user changes the rule.

Microsoft Outlook users love rules. Well, Microsoft Outlook users will love Microsoft Flow.

Microsoft Flow is basically one big "if, then, then" rule app – but don't let us oversimplify this for you – it's so much better! Why? Glad you asked! It's much better because these rules aren't restricted to Outlook.

Microsoft Flow is one giant automation machine. Rules in Microsoft Outlook are essentially automated processes the user defines, and Microsoft Flow helps users turn repetitive tasks into specific step-by-step workflows – hence the name – and automate these multistep workflows into templated processes to increase productivity and efficiency. Plus, don't you get tired of doing the same things over and over again?

Users can set up a plethora of cool processes or Flows:

*Continued on page 4*

The list of apps that integrate with Office 365 expands every day! Considering Microsoft Office 365 now includes Microsoft Teams and Microsoft Flow, the possibilities are incredible. If you've not yet experienced either of these apps, you're truly missing out.

Need help? Call the Tech Experts 24 hour computer emergency hotline at (734) 240-0200.

# Internet Speed Loss: Get What You Pay For

*"As times change and technology becomes more demanding, old connection speeds just won't cut it. Web pages become more complex and the amount of data transferred goes up as well. In order to have the same type of experience and to avoid long loading times, expectations for higher Internet speeds continue to grow."*



*Jason Cooley is Support Services Manager at Tech Experts.*

I remember when 56k modems were exciting. I can easily recall my first cable Internet connection. It was a lightning fast 3mbps (megabytes per second, in case you were wondering).

With gigs and megs, people talk about data and speeds sometimes as if they are interchangeable. They aren't. Let's get that clarification out of the way.

Thanks largely to cell phone data plans, people think in terms of how many gigs they have. What that means is that you can transmit a certain amount of data during your monthly cycle, such as 10 gigs.

The megabytes per second phrase is used to describe the rate at which data transfers. This is your Internet speed.

So now that we know what we are talking about, let's talk speeds and how to maximize them.

As I mentioned before, I remember getting a 3mbps connection. It was lightning fast compared to the dial-up connections that had been the standard.

As times change and technology becomes more demanding, old connection speeds just won't cut it. Web pages become more complex and the amount of data transferred goes up as well.

In order to have the same type of experience and to avoid long loading times, expectations for higher Internet speeds continue to grow.

My home 25mbps connection came and went; now, I have speeds up to 150mbps. There are speeds much higher available, but before you go paying for more speed than you need, make sure you are getting what you pay for.

Running Internet speed tests is a good place to start. You can use a website, like speedtest.net, to check your upload and download speed, as well as ping.

Ping is used to measure latency, or what you may classify as lag. Ping is typically measured in milliseconds and is the measured response time after sending out a request on the Internet.

The download speed is the number typically advertised and the number that is most important to your connection. So you pay for 150mbps. You run a speed test over Wi-Fi and you are only getting 80mbps. What could be the cause?

First, the best way to test your speed would be over an Ethernet cable directly connected to your modem or router. Check your speed over a wired connection to rule out any loss caused by the modem.

If you are experiencing lower than expected speeds while wired to your modem, you may need to contact your service provider. If you are getting the correct speeds while wired, there are a few possible causes.

The most likely culprits of speed loss are the devices between your modem and computer or other device. Wi-Fi and regular routers, especially those that are a little older, often have a maximum speed set at 100mbps. You may even see 10/100 on the router, indicating its 100mbps speed.

Having one of these devices is going to cost you one-third of your potential speed whether you are wired in or not.

Having quality devices to distribute your connection is as important to speed quality as the connection itself.

There are many other factors that can contribute to speed loss. Too many Wi-Fi networks in close proximity can even cause interference. While the possible causes of speed loss can vary, one thing that does not change is that you want to get what you pay for.
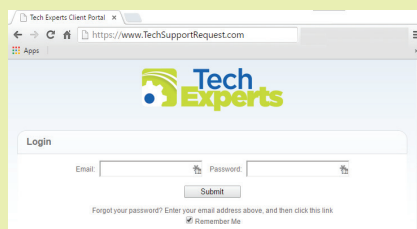


**Create new service requests, check ticket status, and review invoices in our client portal:**
**http://TechSupportRequest.com**

# Ransomware Vs Atlanta: How To Protect Your Systems

Chris Myers is a field service technician at Tech Experts.

On March 22, the local government in the city of Atlanta, Georgia experienced a widespread ransomware cyberattack that affected several city applications and devices.

Ransomware is a type of malware that takes over a computer and locks out the user. The attackers then make contact with the victim and request payment. If the ransom is not paid, they may publish the victim's personal files and data or just continue to block access to them.

In Atlanta, the attackers gained access to some of the city's applications through a network vulnerability. Once they had locked the city's systems with a ransomware known as "SamSam," they asked for six bitcoins to unlock everything. Six bitcoins are currently worth around $51,000 US dollars.

Atlanta chose not to pay the ransom, as there is no guarantee that they would get their files back and they didn't want to encourage any similar attacks. Instead, Atlanta officials awarded nearly 2.7 million dollars to eight private companies in the first couple days after the start of the attack.

The FBI, Department of Homeland Security, and Secret Service have also been assisting city officials in investigating the attack.

As you can see, the consequences of a ransomware attack can be severe. Nearly a month after the breach, nearly all city functions were still being carried out with pen and paper. With that in mind, what are the best ways to prevent them from happening in the first place?

## How to protect yourself against similar cyberattacks

Ransomware attacks usually infiltrate organizations through their



network. Therefore, maintaining good network security practices is a must. These can include:

**Using strong, unique passwords.** Both individuals and companies have a tendency to use shared passwords for different programs, even Windows logins.

If someone gains illicit access to your network or a specific computer, they can't immediately gain access to all of your program logins and computers if you use unique passwords.

**Staying vigilant for phishing.** Phishing is another common method of attack for gaining entry to

install ransomware. 91% of phishing attacks are targeted at specific people in a company, a technique known as spear phishing.

The attacker will study an organization's email format, then send a simple email to an employee designed to appear as if it is a common email from a co-worker.

Most of these emails will look completely normal except for the full sender email address, which is usually something odd such as "ejhjsh@jk.cn."

In many email management applications, the full address is automatically hidden behind the given name of the sender, so staff must be trained to interact with that name to confirm the address.

**Securing your network.** Ensure that a monitored firewall is in place and that all Wi-Fi networks are password protected with WPA2 encryption.

A VPN, or Virtual Private Network, is also a very good thing to have, especially if you have any staff working remotely.

**Keeping operating systems and firmware up-to-date.** Patches for known security vulnerabilities are released quite often.

Most of these are to combat specific new threats that are being used or about to be used in the wild. Staying up-to-date with security and operating system patches shores up your defenses against many common attacks.

> *"Ransomware is a type of malware that takes over a computer and locks out the user. The attackers then make contact with the victim and request payment. If the ransom is not paid, they may publish the victim's personal files and data or just continue to block access to them."*

# What Is Data Retention? Why Do I Need It?

If you are in the medical or legal industry, regulations require you to retain data and records for a certain period of time. The data retention process was a little more clear-cut back when it was only files and sheets of papers in brown boxes that you stored in the attic or the basement.

However, in today's time, almost everything is in digital form, whether it's stored locally on a file server, external hard drives, or in the cloud.

This data needs to be secure and easily accessible in the event you need to retrieve any of it. Depending on how much data you have, there are many options.

The one thing you do not want to do is buy a cheap hard drive, move your data over to it, and think you're safe.

If you only have one copy of that data and you move it to a new location, that is your only copy. You want to have your data saved in more than one location or a mirror copy of it saved.

A business might want to consider a local or cloud server with a RAID setup so that there is a copy of your copy. It creates a copy of your data so that, in the event of a hardware failure or data corruption, the data can be restored from the second copy.

The first copy would be returned to the last version, like nothing happened to it.

If you are a larger business and/or deal with medical or financial information, it would be very wise to utilize data encryption for the stored data.

However, every business should create a data retention policy and follow it. Categorize documents and images, then specify how long the data is to be retained.

Make sure all employees and IT professionals with access to company and client data know and adhere to this policy.

The main thing to keep in mind is the type and quality of hardware that is used. It's great to have a data retention policy in place and follow it exactly, but if your data gets cor-

rupted, stolen, or a hard drive fails, the policy does you no good.

The key to a rock-solid data retention policy starts with having a robust backup solution in place as well.

The backup solution can either be a cloud-based system or an on-site enterprise storage device or server with a proper RAID setup.

Here at Tech Experts, we can assist you with establishing a file server with the correct RAID configuration to ensure that the retained data is safe and secure, with encryption and redundancy built in. Cloud based image backups are also a great way to ensure the safety of your data.

We can also start you on a managed service plan for monitoring and maintenance of that server and your other workstations, laptops, printer, and VoIP phone systems.

Wherever you decide to store your data, make sure that enterprise hardware and security measures are used to ensure that your data will remain intact.

# The Latest Expansions To Office 365, Continued From Page 1

- If an email from your biggest customer comes in, get a push notification on your smartphone.
- Save any attachments that come in through an email in Microsoft Outlook to Microsoft One-Drive or SharePoint.
- Track items like working hours or social media posts or responses in an Excel spreadsheet.

## Microsoft Project

If your Microsoft Office 365 subscription is an Enterprise, Government, or Academic account, Microsoft

Project is available to use. Microsoft Project is a fantastic project management solution.

It facilitates keeping projects, teams, and resources on track and centralized in one organized location, provides an overview of project milestones, and tracks timelines.

As with other Microsoft Office 365 products, Microsoft Project is easily integrated with Microsoft productivity apps.