



Innovative knowledge management:

How M365 optimizes cooperation and collaboration at the German Institute for Economic Research

Worldwide accessibility

Researchers worldwide access the same tools, facilitating collaboration and exchange.

Increased innovation

State-of-the-art technologies help researchers innovate and make scientific advances.

Data security and compliance

M365 meets the strict compliance requirements of DIW Berlin and offers comprehensive security functions.

Client

Deutsches Institut für
Wirtschaftsforschung (DIW Berlin)

Industry

Institute for Research

Platform

Azure Cloud

Services

Migration from Lotus Notes to M365
including Team Telephony

Efficient research collaboration with M365

Since its foundation in 1925, the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW Berlin) has become one of Germany's leading economic research institutes. It is dedicated to researching economic and socio-scientific interrelationships in areas of high social relevance. Its research findings provide well-founded advice for politics and society.

The migration to Microsoft 365 supports DIW Berlin's mission to conduct high-quality research and promote knowledge in socially relevant subject areas. It optimizes internal processes and ensures the high-security requirements of research data.

The Challenge

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Due to our high-security requirements, topics such as data security and compliance had to be carefully coordinated in advance, including involvement of the works council. Protection of our personal data was also ensured.

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[Rainer Bartholdt, Head of Department Research Infrastructure at Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung e.V.](#)

Data management and security for sensitive research data

DIW Berlin previously used the widely available email and messaging software Lotus Notes. Due to expiring product support, the research institute was looking for a new communication and collaboration solution. The goal was to select a robust modern solution, improve integration with other software applications, and improve user-friendliness with seamless connections to cloud services.

After a Europe-wide tender, DWI Berlin awarded SoftwareOne the contract to develop a detailed and closely coordinated migration plan. The institute required particular emphasis on stringent high data security to protect the sensitive research data that is of utmost importance. SoftwareOne's extensive advance audit ensured that appropriate security measures were implemented, and data protection regulations were consistently applied in the cloud solution.



The solution

Professional guidance is crucial to avoid potential mistakes during the migration to M365. The workshops at the beginning of our project were instrumental in ensuring a smooth start for M365 at our institute.

Rainer Bartholdt, Head of Department Research Infrastructure at Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung e.V.

Seamless research communication and collaboration

To fully utilize the added value of M365, DIW Berlin switched from Lotus Notes to Microsoft's online service. The SoftwareOne team created a detailed roadmap to define clear goals and requirements to ensure a smooth migration and optimal use of the new collaboration tools. In comprehensive workshops, SoftwareOne carefully analyzed the IT infrastructure of DIW Berlin to ensure smooth adoption and optimal advantages in the Azure Cloud. Data protection regulations were also reviewed in advance and carefully implemented.

A foundation of M365 services is Azure Active Directory (AAD), a Microsoft cloud-based identity and access management service. At DIW Berlin, it fulfills various essential functions. It is used to facilitate the management of users and control access to cloud solutions such as SharePoint or Teams. In addition, Azure AD offers multi-factor authentication that provides the institute with increased login security and prevents unauthorized access.

Parallel to the Azure AD connection, SoftwareOne implemented a basic M365 configuration. It included basic settings for M365 services to correspond precisely to the research institute's specific requirements and workflows. These included establishing user accounts, assigning licenses, and establishing communication and collaboration tools like SharePoint and Teams.

Microsoft Exchange Online, a cloud-based email service, was implemented next. It requires no additional resources to operate its Exchange server infrastructure. It's highly scalable and requires minimal administration from the DIW IT department. Regular updates ensure comprehensive data protection, such as up-to-date security functions, including anti-spam and anti-malware. In addition to its high availability, employees of DIW Berlin also benefit from the new IT solution through the synchronization of e-mails, calendars, and contacts on different end-user devices.

The last step in DIW Berlin's renewal was the changeover from conventional telephony to "Voice over IP" (VoIP) to enable voice communication via the Internet. Instead of conventional telephone lines, calls are now made exclusively via the team platform, both internally and externally. VoIP is cheaper than traditional landline telephony, especially for international calls, and offers additional functions, including video calls and call forwarding.

The result

Our cooperation with SoftwareOne was a complete success. The professional project management, outstanding cooperation, and excellent team know-how led to a smooth and successful implementation process. Their cooperation was a great added value, and I am happy to recommend them.

Rainer Bartholdt, Head
of Department Research
Infrastructure at Deutsches
Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung
e.V.

Worldwide exchange for more scientific progress

The migration to M365 opened a multitude of opportunities for DIW Berlin as an internationally networked research institute:

- **Fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing:** With collaboration tools such as Teams and SharePoint, M365 facilitates collaboration and knowledge sharing among researchers and teams within the institute and worldwide effective communication through email, video, chat as well as collaborative document editing.
- **Increased efficiency:** Implementing M365 optimizes internal processes and increases efficiency throughout the institute automation of recurring tasks and processes.
- **Increasing data security:** Comprehensive security features enable DIW Berlin to securely manage and protect its sensitive data through encryption, identity management, and secure access controls.
- **Flexibility:** M365 gives employees and researchers the flexibility to work from anywhere data can be accessed via mobile devices.
- **Innovative capacity:** Continuous development of M365 provides immediate access to the latest technologies provides support for researchers to innovate and make scientific progress.
- **Scalability:** M365 offers DIW Berlin a highly scalable solution that can adapt to growth without extensive hardware investments.
- **Cost efficiency:** Optimized resource use improves cost control.

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