



Dispersed Workforces Driving Collaboration – anywhere, in any time zone and across multiple teams

Alan Eardley, Head of Solution Design & Jack Binnall, Office 365 Consultant, CPS

Change is an accepted part of everyday life. From technological advances to changing customer expectations, the pace of that change can feel breathtaking at times.

But even though businesses and individuals alike have never had to work so hard to keep up, the pace of change we are currently experiencing is the slowest it is ever likely to be.

One of the biggest changes facing organisations, concerns the evolution of the modern workplace. Driven by a range of factors – including



technological, organisational, and personal – the workplace of 2018 looks very different to that of 10 or 20 years ago.

RISE OF THE DISPERSED WORKFORCE

Supply chains and value chains have expanded into global operations, turning many businesses into international concerns. Developing almost in parallel with that has been the rise of the dispersed workforce. Your centre of operations may be in one country, but you might have key knowledge workers in the markets you serve, where their knowledge and language skills are invaluable.

But those remote workers need to be plugged into the rest of the organisation and able to work alongside team members in other offices, countries, even other time zones.

A dispersed workforce, whether spread across a global office network, or based around the inclusion of remote workers, can present key challenges to any business. Collaboration tools can help empower teams but to get the most out of them those tools have to work

with you and your company's culture and not simply become a burdensome additional layer of process.

As a long-standing Microsoft partner, we have deep experience of implementing solutions for our clients using tools such as SharePoint and Dynamics 365.

One of our go-to tools for collaboration is Microsoft Teams. Being available through Office 365 is just one reason why we think Microsoft Teams will become one of the dominant collaboration platforms for businesses. In this paper, we will explore some of the features and benefits of Microsoft Teams, explain how it differs from other tools, and detail how it can help organisations like yours.

Microsoft Teams, as the name suggests, enables a group of workers to focus on a common goal by organising themselves as a team through threaded conversations, shared files and documents, virtual meetings and more.

BE PART OF ALL YOUR TEAMS

Users can be a member of up to 250 teams collaborating with member and applications that support those teams. This communication can be done across disperse geographical locations thanks to the integration with Office 365 and the different products and services your team use.

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TEAM COLLABORATION

Communicate with your team via video, voice or threaded communication. Tag team members to get their attention, attach a file or even 'like' a conversation. By making the most of common ways of interacting which are familiar to many people through well-known social media platforms, the rate of adoption

for Microsoft Teams can be increased. There is also a lot to be said for allowing text-based communications to be enriched as much as possible; including emojis and gifs in threads can add humour and personality. Although any features that aren't part of your company culture can easily be switched off if required.

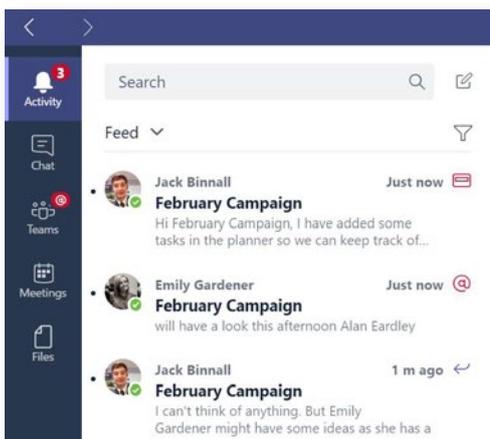


Figure 1- Notifications

NOTIFICATIONS

Receive notifications when you are mentioned as part of a team, directly in a conversation or when you are mentioned in a document comment as outlined in Figure 1.

If someone tags you in a conversation, you can get in touch with them directly by viewing their contact card (Figure 2). You can send an email, open a text conversation, start a voice call or even a video call all within the Microsoft Teams application.

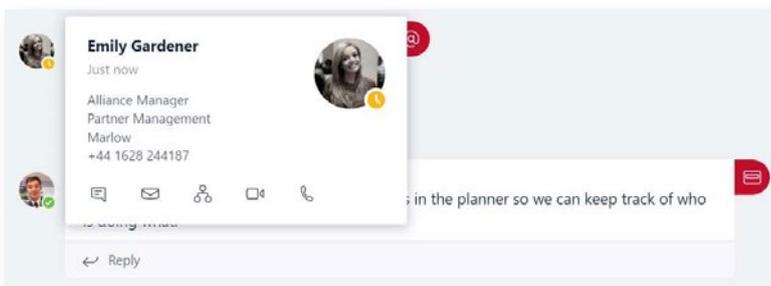
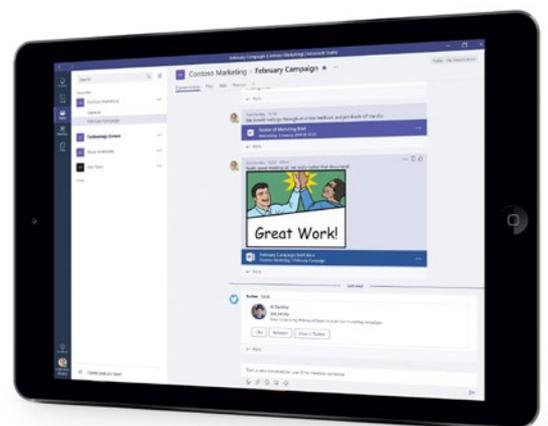


Figure 2- Contact card within Microsoft Teams



COLLABORATE ON DOCUMENTS, PRESENTATIONS AND SPREADSHEETS

View and edit the files you need when you need to. Edit them in Microsoft Teams, open them in native applications or via Office Online.

Figure 3, for example, shows a user opening Word Online within Microsoft Teams, to view and amend the document.

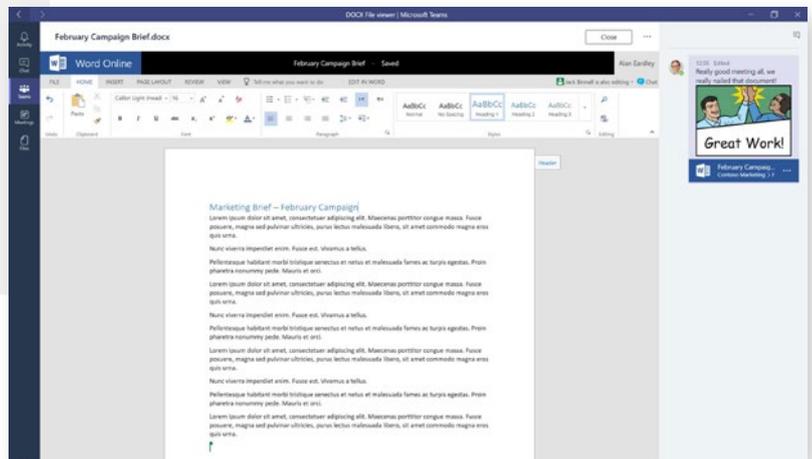


Figure 3- View and edit files within Microsoft Teams

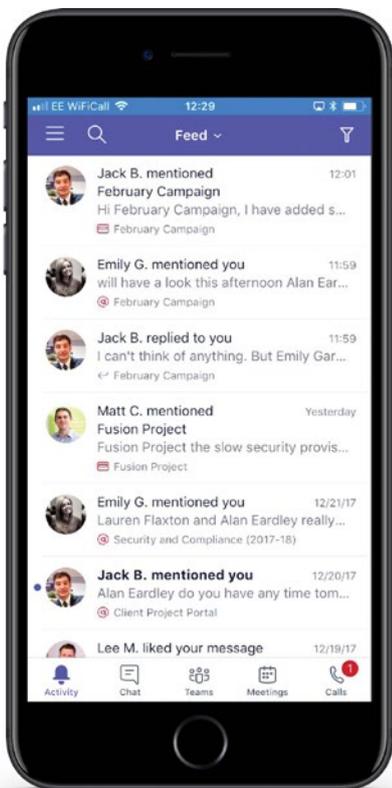


Figure 4- Microsoft Teams mobile app view

MEETINGS AS A TEAM

Set up meetings as a team or in team channels. Team members can meet with video or voice calls. Invite other colleagues to the meeting and share desktops to interact.

ONE APPLICATION FOR ALL DEVICES

Teams can be used across iOS (Figure 4), and Android phones as well as on Mac and Windows laptops or PCs. This means that the device of choice can be used, with no loss of features or productivity.

SAME AS OTHER SOLUTIONS?

Microsoft Teams differs from other collaboration tools such as Slack on a number of different levels. For starters Microsoft Teams is a product that sits in Office 365; so if you have Office 365 the chances are you already have Microsoft Teams, unlike Slack which has a subscription cost. Microsoft Teams also has the ability to be controlled by company administrators to limit the functionality of Microsoft Teams to fit in with organisational policy.



SUMMARY

Microsoft Teams can dramatically change the way that your teams work. It can increase the effectiveness of communication through persistent chat that team members can search and browse. It can increase the effectiveness of real-time communications by integrating voice and video calls, and meetings directly in the application.

It can reduce the number of applications your team members need to have open by bringing the ability to work with tools such as Power BI, Jira and Team Foundation Services into the application. It can supplement internal communications with external feeds from sources such as Twitter to provide a richer communications feed.

Microsoft Teams can bring people together, increase productivity of remote workers, mobile workers and those that might sit in other teams. But when you combine the power of enhanced collaboration and communication with clearly defined business objectives, you can really start to reap the rewards.

You can wave goodbye to the nightmare of document version control.

The clear cost savings of Microsoft Teams is often overlooked. With the omnipresent reduction of costs looming large for all departments, the use of a structured collaboration tool can remove travel, room hire and wider expenses from a project budget, not forgetting the time lost travelling to multiple meeting sites, both internally and externally.



WHO ARE CPS?

We know the importance of workplace productivity and transformation, which is why we help our clients reach their business objectives by supporting their journey to digital transformation.

Underpinned by Microsoft technologies, our consultants take pride in delivering tangible technology solutions that solve both technical and business issues.

We don't believe in a 'one size fits all' approach. Our consultants spend time with clients to appreciate their current IT landscape and what might need to change, adapt or evolve to meet business goals and directives.

To find out how we can support you on your journey, contact us today.

e hello@cps.co.uk
 w www.cps.co.uk

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