

Microsoft News Update – January 2015

Selected news without the “marketese” – Published by [Louis Lazarus](#) (Independent Technology Strategy Consultant).

Viewpoint

Microsoft makes the Office 365 ProPlus Benefit available to all students and educators on a worldwide basis. Eligible organisations can provide Office 365 ProPlus subscriptions at no extra cost for all students, faculty and staff. Yammer Enterprise is now included in the Office 365 kiosk plan.

Microsoft will be providing Dynamics CRM services in Japan from local datacentres and are planning to offer Office 365 Dynamics CRM Online from datacentres in Australia by the end of March 2015. Microsoft has also announced the U.S. general availability of Azure Government and upcoming availability of Dynamics CRM Online for Government.

The Internet of Things (IoT) has been getting Microsoft’s attention. The company has been offering half-day IoT Quick Start workshops in partnership with Aditi, CGI, Cognizant, Rockwell and Tata to help galvanize industry activity that utilises Microsoft’s Azure IoT Services.

January will see changes to Visual Studio Online pricing and licensing. From 1 January, Visual Studio Online users will no longer have to pay any per-processor (or any other per deployment environment) charge for Release Management.

Microsoft has said that there over 1.5 million registered Windows Insiders and have hinted that the next preview release of Windows 10 in 2015 will include a range of new features.

In with the new and out with the old - Windows Server 2003 extended support ends on 14 July 2015 and extended support for SQL Server 2005 will end on 12 April 2016.

The Windows Store now enables carrier billing for app purchases in China through China Mobile, India with Idea and Brazil via Claro. U.S, Verizon Wireless, has also added Windows Phone to the platforms it supports with carrier billing.

Bitcoins gain Microsoft’s support. You can exchange bitcoins to buy apps and games for Windows, Windows Phone and Xbox. In the U.S. you can use BitPay to trade-in bitcoin (at current market value) and add it to your Microsoft account. Those funds can then be used to purchase content in the Windows Store, or in stores that house Xbox Games, Xbox Music or Xbox Video.

Company

Microsoft acquires Acomplii

Microsoft has acquired Acomplii, a provider of mobile email apps for iOS and Android. The acquisition is intended to extend Outlook’s cross-platform capabilities as part of the company’s plans to increase the range of mobile devices supported by Microsoft Office.

[View source article.](#)

Accenture and Microsoft launch hybrid cloud platform

Accenture and Microsoft have introduced the Accenture Hybrid Cloud Solution for Microsoft Azure. Working with Avanade, the companies are co-funding and co-engineering this platform with technologies to migrate and manage applications between private and public clouds in a controlled and automated way.

[View source article.](#)

Microsoft acquires HockeyApp

Microsoft has announced that it has acquired HockeyApp, a service for mobile crash analytics and app distribution for iOS, Android and Windows Phone developers. The company plans to integrate HockeyApp into the Application Insights service in Visual Studio Online so that it includes support for iOS and Android.

[View source article.](#)

Salesforce announces OneDrive for Business and SharePoint integration

Salesforce.com has announced that its Salesforce Files Connect, a centralised universal file-sharing solution, includes integration with OneDrive for Business and SharePoint.

[View source article.](#)

Product

Microsoft releases Dynamics CRM 2015

Microsoft has announced the general availability of Dynamics CRM 2015 and the 2015 Update of Dynamics Marketing. Changes have been made to marketing, sales and service with a focus on improving collaboration between roles. Microsoft plans to adopt a six month release cycle for Dynamics.

[View source article.](#)

Microsoft announces the release of Azure RemoteApp

Microsoft has announced that Azure RemoteApp will be generally available on 11 December 2014. The service supports the deployment of Windows apps in the cloud so they can be accessed from any device using Microsoft's Remote Desktop Protocol (RDP).

[View source article.](#)

Microsoft announces availability of Bing Pulse 2.0 beta

Microsoft has announced the availability of Bing Pulse 2.0 beta, which is a service for event planners, producers and participants. The service features a producer dashboard that allows event organisers to set up, customise and control a Bing Pulse. This includes audience real-time feedback, pushing poll questions to the audience and customising the look-and-feel of a Bing Pulse, including integration of social media handles or hashtags. The producer also has the ability to immediately view results. Participants can vote from their browser on a web-enabled device across various platforms.

[View source article.](#)

Microsoft Desktop Optimization Pack 2014 R2 released

The Microsoft Desktop Optimization Pack (MDOP) 2014 R2 has been released. MDOP is a suite of virtualisation management and security technologies that is available as a subscription for Software Assurance customers. The release is focused on application and settings virtualisation.

[View source article.](#)

Microsoft releases MSN apps for iOS, Android and Amazon devices

Microsoft has made its MSN apps available on iOS, Android and Amazon devices. The apps include News, Weather, Sports, Money, Health & Fitness as well as Food & Drink and can be obtained from the Apple App Store, Google Play Store, Windows Store, Windows Phone Store and the Amazon App Store. The Weather app will be made available on the Apple App Store at a later date.

[View source article.](#)

Microsoft announces Skype Translator Preview

Microsoft has announced the first phase of the Skype Translator preview programme. The preview starts with two spoken languages, Spanish and English, and the availability of 40+ instant messaging languages for Skype customers registered via the Skype Translator sign-up page and using Windows 8.1 on the desktop or device.

[View source article.](#)

Microsoft announces Azure Backup for client machines running Windows

Microsoft has announced support for backing up data to Azure from Windows 7, Windows 8 and Windows 8.1 machines. Once the initial backup copy is completed, Azure Backup tracks changes to the backed up files and transfers only the changed content over HTTPS.

[View source article.](#)

Microsoft releases Analytics Platform System (APS) Appliance Update 3

Microsoft has announced the release of the Analytics Platform System (APS) Appliance Update (AU) 3. APS is Microsoft's big data in a box appliance for relational data warehouses of scale. The release extends the PolyBase to allow customers to utilise the HDFS infrastructure in Hadoop for ORC files and directory modelling, enables query from Power BI to on premise APS and now uses Windows Server 2012 R2 and SQL Server 2014.

[View source article.](#)

Developer

Microsoft announces Azure Premium Storage Disks preview

Microsoft has announced the preview of Azure Premium Storage Disks. Azure now offers two types of durable storage: Premium Storage and Standard Storage. Premium Storage stores data on Solid State Drives (SSDs) whereas Standard Storage stores data on Hard Disk Drives (HDDs).

Premium Storage is specifically designed for Azure Virtual Machine workloads requiring consistent high performance and low latency. Premium Storage is currently available only for storing data on disks used by Azure Virtual Machines.

[View source article.](#)

Microsoft announces updates to data platform products and services

Microsoft has announced updates to some of its data platform products and services.

A new version of Azure SQL Database that adds near-complete SQL Server engine compatibility, including support for larger databases with online indexing and parallel queries, improved T-SQL support with common language runtime and XML index as well as monitoring and troubleshooting with extended events.

The latest release of the Analytics Platform System includes a data management gateway that establishes a secure connection between on-premises data stored in the Analytics Platform System and Microsoft's cloud business intelligence and advanced analytics services such as Power BI and Azure Machine Learning.

Microsoft has also updated its Java SDK with the Microsoft JDBC Driver for SQL Server the SQL Server Driver for PHP.

The SQL Server Migration Assistant (SSMA) tool has been released to facilitate migration of IBM DB2 workloads to SQL Server.

[View source article.](#)

Visual Studio Events

Hearing directly from the experts is the best way to get a really good understanding of Visual Studio. Microsoft run in-person and on-line events that cover aspects of the company's latest developer tools.

<http://www.microsoft.com/visualstudio/eng/visual-studio-events>.

Customer Reference

Delphi selects Microsoft Azure platform

Delphi has created a solution that addresses an aftermarket connected car service called Delphi Connect, which was built using the Microsoft Azure platform. The solution manages extracts and analyses information from a plug-and-play on-board diagnostic module in the car. This provides consumers with information such as location tracking, service alerts, driver behaviour monitoring, key fob emulation using a smartphone, etc.

[View source article](#).

Events

Date	Description	Venue
05 Jan 10:00	Showcase Classroom : Teachers	London
06 Jan 10:00	Showcase Classroom : School Leaders	London
13 Jan 08:45	Cloudamour presents: The Gift of Time	London
14 Jan 09:30	Microsoft Transform The Datacentre Workshop	London
15 Jan 09:30	Microsoft Enterprise Mobility Workshop	Reading
15 Jan 13:00	Ultima presents: Microsoft Windows Server 2003 & HP Converged Systems	London
19 Jan 09:30	Cloud Gaming Day	London
20 Jan 09:00	VIPP: Healthcare/Public Sector Workshop	London
21 Jan 09:00	VIPP: Retail/Manufacturing Workshop	London
22 Jan 09:00	Data Platform Modernisation - Immersion	London
22 Jan 09:30	Microsoft Enterprise Mobility Workshop	Aberdeen
27 Jan 09:00	VIPP: Healthcare/Public Sector/Manufacturing/Retail Business Briefing and Technical Workshop	Edinburgh
27 Jan 09:15	Microsoft IT Camp: Implementing a Mobile-First World with Microsoft Enterprise Device Infrastructure	Manchester
27 Jan 10:00	Azure Data Services Immersion Track	London
27 Jan 10:00	Big Data Bootcamp Track	London
27 Jan 10:00	Business Intelligence Immersion Track	London
27 Jan 10:00	Data Insights Immersion Track	London
27 Jan 10:00	Data Platform Modernisation Track	London
27 Jan 10:00	Data Science Immersion Track	London
27 Jan 10:00	IoT Immersion Track	London
27 Jan 10:00	Unlock insights on any data with the Microsoft Data Culture	London
28 Jan 09:15	Microsoft IT Camp: Extend your Data Centre with Microsoft Azure	Manchester
29 Jan 09:30	Microsoft Enterprise Mobility Workshop	Manchester
29 Jan 09:30	Microsoft Transform The Datacentre Workshop	Sheffield

Date	Description	Venue
04 Feb 09:30	Microsoft Enterprise Mobility Workshop	Cardiff
04 Feb 09:30	Microsoft Transform The Datacentre Workshop	Reading
11 Feb 09:00	Data Insights Immersion	Manchester
11 Feb 09:00	Data Platform Modernisation - Immersion	Manchester
11 Feb 09:00	Data Platform Modernisation - Immersion Experience	London
11 Feb 09:30	Microsoft Enterprise Mobility Workshop	Liverpool
17 Feb 09:00	Data Insights - Immersion	Edinburgh
17 Feb 09:00	Data Platform Modernisation - Immersion	Edinburgh
17 Feb 09:30	Microsoft Enterprise Mobility Workshop	London
18 Feb 09:30	Microsoft Transform The Datacentre Workshop	Manchester
19 Feb 09:30	Clear People present: Who owns the Intranet now anyway? Bringing IT and Marketing together to create an exceptional internal customer experience	London
24 Feb 09:15	Microsoft IT Camp: Implementing a Mobile-First World with Microsoft Enterprise Device Infrastructure	London
24 Feb 10:00	Azure Data Services Immersion Track	Leeds
24 Feb 10:00	Big Data Bootcamp Track	Leeds
24 Feb 10:00	Business Intelligence Immersion Track	Leeds
24 Feb 10:00	Data Insights Immersion Track	Leeds
24 Feb 10:00	Data Platform Modernisation Track	Leeds
24 Feb 10:00	Data Science Immersion Track	Leeds
24 Feb 10:00	IoT Immersion Track	Leeds
24 Feb 10:00	Unlock insights on any data with the Microsoft Data Culture	Leeds
25 Feb 09:15	Microsoft IT Camp: Extend your Data Centre with Microsoft Azure	London
04 Mar 09:00	Data Insights - Immersion	Reading
04 Mar 09:00	Data Platform Modernisation - Immersion Experience	Reading
04 Mar 09:30	Microsoft Transform The Datacentre Workshop	Edinburgh
06 Mar 09:30	Concentra presents: How to define and implement a World Class Intranet	London
10 Mar 09:00	Data Insights - Immersion	London
10 Mar 09:00	Data Platform Modernisation - Immersion Experience	London
10 Mar 09:30	Microsoft Enterprise Mobility Workshop	Reading
13 Mar 09:30	Exploring Azure in Linux for IT Pros	London
17 Mar 09:30	Microsoft Enterprise Mobility Workshop	Edinburgh
18 Mar 09:30	Microsoft Transform The Datacentre Workshop	Bristol
19 Mar 09:30	Microsoft Transform The Datacentre Workshop	Reading
24 Mar 09:00	VIPP: Healthcare/Public Sector Workshop	Manchester
24 Mar 09:30	Microsoft Enterprise Mobility Workshop	London
24 Mar 10:00	Azure Data Services Immersion Track	Edinburgh
24 Mar 10:00	Big Data Bootcamp Track	Edinburgh
24 Mar 10:00	Business Intelligence Immersion Track	Edinburgh
24 Mar 10:00	Data Insights Immersion Track	Edinburgh

Date	Description	Venue
24 Mar 10:00	Data Platform Modernisation Track	Edinburgh
24 Mar 10:00	Data Science Immersion Track	Edinburgh
24 Mar 10:00	IoT Immersion Track	Edinburgh
24 Mar 10:00	Unlock insights on any data with the Microsoft Data Culture	Edinburgh
25 Mar 09:00	VIPP: Retail/Manufacturing Workshop	Manchester
25 Mar 09:30	Microsoft Transform The Datacentre Workshop	Leeds
31 Mar 09:00	Data Insights - Immersion	Glasgow
31 Mar 09:00	Data Platform Modernisation - Immersion Experience	Glasgow
31 Mar 09:30	IRW presents: How Mobile Technology is Changing the Way We Do Business	London
01 Apr 09:30	Microsoft Transform The Datacentre Workshop	London
08 Apr 09:30	Microsoft Transform The Datacentre Workshop	Glasgow
08 Apr 10:00	Azure Data Services Immersion Track	Birmingham
08 Apr 10:00	Big Data Bootcamp Track	Birmingham
08 Apr 10:00	Business Intelligence Immersion Track	Birmingham
08 Apr 10:00	Data Insights Immersion Track	Birmingham
08 Apr 10:00	Data Platform Modernisation Track	Birmingham
08 Apr 10:00	Data Science Immersion Track	Birmingham
08 Apr 10:00	IoT Immersion Track	Birmingham
08 Apr 10:00	Unlock insights on any data with the Microsoft Data Culture	Birmingham
09 Apr 09:30	Microsoft Transform The Datacentre Workshop	Birmingham
22 Apr 09:30	Microsoft Enterprise Mobility Workshop	Leeds
23 Apr 09:00	Qorus Software presents: SharePoint Document & Proposal Automation	London
28 Apr 09:00	Data Insights - Immersion	York
28 Apr 09:00	Data Platform Modernisation - Immersion Experience	York
28 Apr 09:00	VIPP: Healthcare Workshop	London
28 Apr 09:30	Microsoft Enterprise Mobility Workshop	London
29 Apr 09:00	VIPP: Government Workshop	London
06 May 09:00	Data Insights - Immersion	Bristol
06 May 09:00	Data Platform Modernisation - Immersion Experience	Bristol
12 May 09:30	Frontier Technology Ltd presents: Restrategise DR & Backup with Microsoft & CommVault	London
12 May 10:00	Azure Data Services Immersion Track	Reading
12 May 10:00	Big Data Bootcamp Track	Reading
12 May 10:00	Business Intelligence Immersion Track	Reading
12 May 10:00	Data Insights Immersion Track	Reading
12 May 10:00	Data Platform Modernisation Track	Reading
12 May 10:00	Data Science Immersion Track	Reading
12 May 10:00	IoT Immersion Track	Reading
12 May 10:00	Unlock insights on any data with the Microsoft Data Culture	Reading
13 May 09:30	Microsoft Enterprise Mobility Workshop	Bristol

Date	Description	Venue
13 May 09:30	Microsoft Transform The Datacentre Workshop	Reading
19 May 10:00	Azure Data Services Immersion Track	London
19 May 10:00	Big Data Bootcamp Track	London
19 May 10:00	Business Intelligence Immersion Track	London
19 May 10:00	Data Insights Immersion Track	London
19 May 10:00	Data Platform Modernisation Track	London
19 May 10:00	Data Science Immersion Track	London
19 May 10:00	IoT Immersion Track	London
19 May 10:00	Unlock insights on any data with the Microsoft Data Culture	London
20 May 09:30	Microsoft Enterprise Mobility Workshop	Birmingham
20 May 09:30	Microsoft Transform The Datacentre Workshop	Southampton
26 May 09:00	VIPP: Healthcare/Public Sector Workshop	Manchester
27 May 09:00	VIPP: Retail/Manufacturing Workshop	Manchester
02 Jun 09:00	Data Insights - Immersion	Manchester
02 Jun 09:00	Data Platform Modernisation - Immersion Experience	Manchester
03 Jun 09:30	Microsoft Transform The Datacentre Workshop	Cardiff
05 Jun 09:30	Microsoft Transform The Datacentre Workshop	Reading
16 Jun 09:30	Microsoft Transform The Datacentre Workshop	London
17 Jun 09:00	Data Insights - Immersion	Cardiff
17 Jun 09:00	Data Platform Modernisation - Immersion Experience	Cardiff
23 Jun 09:00	VIPP: Retail Workshop	London
24 Jun 09:00	VIPP: Manufacturing Workshop	London
	Events for Enterprise Customers	
	Enterprise Events	
	Customer Licensing Education Events	

Useful Microsoft Links

<u>Case Studies</u>	Filter by software and services, industry, solution, organisation size or publication date.
<u>Directions to Microsoft Offices</u>	Directions for customers attending meetings at Microsoft offices in the UK
<u>Enterprise Learning Framework</u>	A tool that helps corporations develop a training and communication plan for employees.
<u>Enterprise Search from Microsoft</u>	Information about Microsoft's enterprise search offering
<u>Facts about Microsoft</u>	Information about Microsoft Corporation.
<u>Information for Enterprise Customers</u>	Highlights opportunities to successfully manage and accelerate change, using Microsoft's current and future solutions for the cloud and on-premise
<u>Learning Snacks</u>	Learning Snacks are short, interactive presentations about popular topics created by Microsoft Learning experts.
<u>Microsoft and the Environment</u>	How Microsoft and its partners use technologies and responsible business practices to address environmental challenges worldwide.
<u>Microsoft Developer Centre</u>	MSDN Developer Centres and Resource Centres pull together content and resources around specific products and technologies.
<u>Microsoft Interoperability</u>	Information on the interoperability capabilities of Microsoft software
<u>Microsoft Licensing</u>	General volume licensing information.
<u>Microsoft Patterns and Practices</u>	Recommendations on how to design and develop custom applications using the Microsoft platform.
<u>Microsoft Research</u>	Microsoft Research is dedicated to conducting both basic and applied research in computer science and software engineering.
<u>Microsoft Solution Accelerators</u>	Free, authoritative resources to help IT Professionals proactively plan, integrate, and operate IT systems.
<u>Microsoft Support Lifecycle</u>	Provides guidelines for product support availability at the time of product release and throughout the product life.
<u>Microsoft Virtual Labs</u>	Try out Microsoft's newest products in a free, online virtual environment.
<u>Office</u>	Home page for Microsoft Office.
<u>Office Online Training</u>	For people wanting to learn how to use Microsoft's productivity suite.
<u>Software Assurance and Volume Licensing Product Catalogue</u>	Online catalogue of training available for Software Assurance and Volume Licensing.
<u>TechNet Library</u>	The TechNet Library contains technical documentation for IT professionals using Microsoft products, tools, and technologies.
<u>UK Architecture Centre</u>	This site is dedicated to the UK architectural community.
<u>Microsoft Events</u>	List of all planned Microsoft events around the world with tools to show what is planned in your location.
<u>What is .NET?</u>	An overview of Microsoft's .NET Framework
<u>Windows Server Technical Resources</u>	This page includes links to Windows Server product documentation, learning resources, support options and developer resources