

INSIGHT PAPER

Balancing collaboration with information governance - the digital government conundrum

Create a flexible, modern and productive workplace enhanced with sustained information governance.



Objective

The digital government conundrum

The way information is created, evaluated, captured, protected, consumed and distributed is key to effective digital government.

It can empower your agency to extract a wealth of business value from your data. It can also minimise the risks and costs of mismanaged information.

The key to harnessing the benefits of digital government lies in a sound information management strategy supported by a robust governance framework.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss how to leverage the communication and collaboration benefits of Microsoft 365 with effortless information and process governance capabilities of Objective.

The combination of Microsoft 365 and Objective ECM ultimately provides government agencies with well-managed information to better support, protect and serve the community.

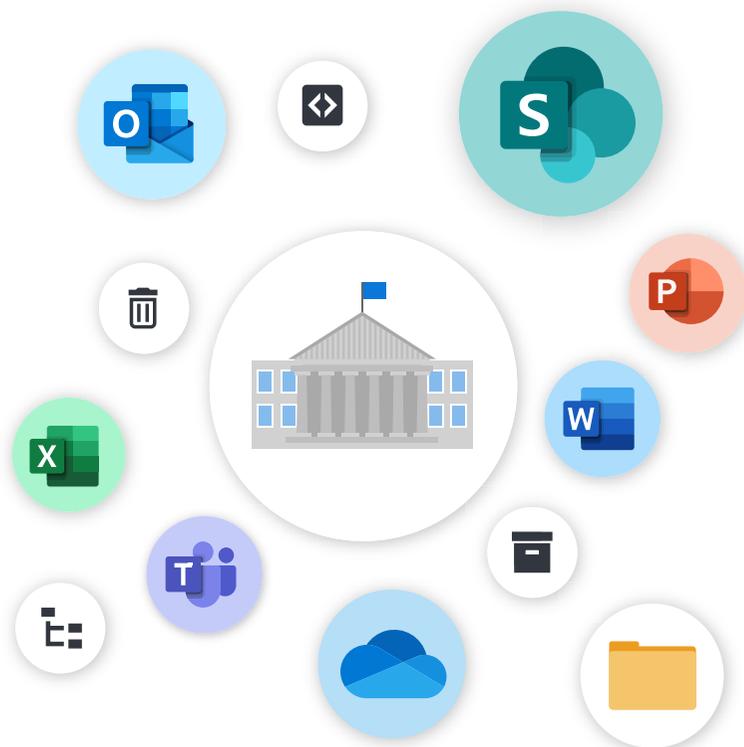


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Introduction

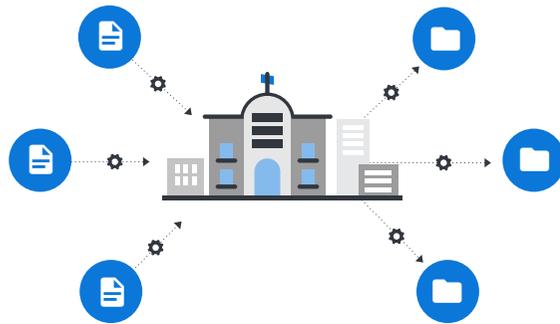
It is essential to provide a work environment that offers an easy way for users to communicate and collaborate.

Most organisations are achieving this with the suite of applications provided with Microsoft 365. It is equally important that government agencies maintain complete and accurate information of what users create, send or receive as part of their work.

How do government agencies deliver the governance required while freeing users to collaborate as desired?

The first consideration should be developing and maintaining a strong information, process, and collaboration governance framework. The goal is to strengthen control over your information management practices while increasing the value of information wherever it may be stored (whether in Microsoft 365 or another Line of Business system). What you manage and how you manage it can mean the difference between a static repository and a dynamic information ecosystem.

Governance becomes the foundation upon which the information ecosystem is built and grown. It is the framework that ensures success as you address the people, policy, process and platform components of your digital journey. In many cases, it is the “glue” of coexisting technologies that extends the value of current IT investments and enables the interoperability and integration of line of business systems, content repositories, and business processes across government.





SECTION

1

**Modern,
collaborative
working**

We know that the **risk of burnout has skyrocketed** since COVID-19 began. Our Work Trend Index shows that the average worker is spending **125 per cent longer in meetings** than they did before the pandemic, while also sending **42 per cent more after-hours messages** than they used to. Our public sector is certainly aboard this train, with government agencies holding **13,500 meetings on our GovTEAMS platform** every week.¹

Modern, collaborative working

Collaboration is critical to driving innovation and efficiencies for modern government agencies.

Ubiquitous access to high-speed internet connections and the rise of cloud computing has enabled corporate collaboration across distributed workforces more so than ever before. Collaboration cultivates a more innovative, educated and efficient workplace and can also increase staff morale. Current generation collaboration suites, of which Microsoft 365 is one of the most popular, offer users the ability to share and participate across various activities that include document production and distribution, video conferencing, corporate social networks, co-authoring and machine-learning enabled information discovery.

Microsoft 365 is a multi-purpose, multi-industry platform, and this is reflected in the range of tools it offers users. Software that commonly forms part of the Microsoft 365 suite includes:

- **Email services** (e.g. Exchange Online, Outlook Mail, Outlook Calendar, Outlook People and Outlook Tasks)
- **Office applications** (e.g. Word, Excel, PowerPoint applications)
- **Collaboration tools** (e.g. OneDrive for Business, SharePoint Online, Microsoft Teams, Stream, Yammer and Outlook Online).

1. Work is being reinvented: How government agencies can get the most out of the hybrid office. [Web Page](#). Accessed 17/07/2021

We believe that government agencies would realise significant benefits from implementing an integrated Microsoft 365/Objective ECM solution - providing both robust information governance and unparalleled collaboration.

This array of options offers users and business leaders the flexibility to select the right tool for the job at hand. The downside of all this user choice is the need to ensure that corporate compliance and governance needs are addressed consistently across all tools - enforcing common data models and avoiding the creation of isolated, unmanaged data silos.

Does Microsoft understand the importance of corporations' information governance requirements across the globe with Microsoft 365? They certainly do. Their SharePoint platform has been evolving in the context of information governance. Since SharePoint 2010, there have been many improvements to the information governance capabilities for organisations, however, these do not necessarily meet the complex requirements of government and highly regulated industries.

These requirements are addressed and endorsed through Microsoft's extensive partner network. Since the earliest versions of Office 365, Microsoft's integration and plug-in architecture has been a critical strategy to provide seamless integration of the Microsoft platform with 3rd party products, methodologies, and tools. Microsoft not only caters for 3rd party partner integration in their platforms, but they also actively endorse their partner solutions for business scenarios that aren't 100% natural for their platform.

As a Microsoft gold partner, together with 30 years of experience in designing, building and implementing software for the public sector and other highly regulated industries, Objective is passionate about the importance of public policy and services to our communities. We understand government business and are committed to helping government agencies operate efficiently and effectively, with transparency and accountability. Both Objective and Microsoft believe that government agencies would realise significant benefits from implementing an integrated Microsoft 365/Objective ECM solution - providing both robust information governance and unparalleled collaboration.



SECTION

2

**Collaboration
and Governance**

Collaboration and Governance



Microsoft 365 is an ideal platform for enterprise collaboration.

However, independent analysis concludes that it is not a comprehensive governance and records management solution for organisations that need to demonstrate accountability of information or decisions.

A recent study conducted by The Association for Intelligent Information Management (AIIM)², identified 63% of respondents surveyed see a continuing role for 3rd party solutions in maximising the impact of their Microsoft 365 investment. Top priorities are governance and records management (42%), integration with back-end processes like HR or finance (38%), and integration with key industry-specific processes (34%).



42%

of government agencies see **governance and records management** as top priorities.



When providing a self-evaluation of their implementations to date, organisations said their biggest weakness is “**governing your data – automatically retaining, deleting, and storing data and records in a compliant manner.**”

The Association for Intelligent Information Management (AIIM)

Mastering your Microsoft 365 and SharePoint Investment: Moving from Rapid Adoption to Sensible Maturity, 2020 ².



According to international recordkeeping standards (ISO 15489 & ISO 16175), records can only be fully understood when in the context of other records and in relation to the people creating, using and managing them.

Organisations must consider retention and disposal standards not just for content within Microsoft 365 but all content, whether physical or digital, from any application.



Retain information as assets

Retention labels applied at a document level may, in some circumstances, remove the context of other records as they are not managed as an aggregation. While label retentions can be applied automatically, the additional overhead of a document by document review and destruction process creates a considerable indirect human cost, often not calculated by government agencies.



Physical Content

While digitally-born content is standard in today’s environment, physical records continue to be generated and need to be stored, tracked and managed, particularly in the public sector. This will continue to be the case for many years to come as the cost of digitising physical content currently outweighs the benefit of reducing storage and making it available to everybody anywhere.

2. AIIM, Mastering Your Microsoft 365 and SharePoint Investment: Moving from Rapid Adoption to Sensible Maturity, 2020

Compliance must be delivered seamlessly such that users have the flexibility to work and collaborate as needed.



Integrating Line of Business Systems

Line of Business (LOB) systems generate content such as invoices, letters, certificates and licences. This content needs to be treated as records and managed as such. Generally speaking, these LOBs do not have sufficient records management capabilities to manage content in line with legislated records management standards effectively. LOB Integrations need to take into account both content and the context that is generated. In most cases, the ability to provide links to the LOB record in place can be generated as a result of this context. Objective provides common public sector out-of-the-box integrations with Salesforce, Microsoft Dynamics, Infor's Pathway, Civica and TechOne's P&R providing both content and context.



Complete view of information

The ability to group (aggregate) records and manage as one from a range of different sources, allows every employee with the correct permissions, to access and discover the entire context across the organisation, not just content stored in Microsoft 365. Additionally, having a complete view of the information means one central place to manage and apply your dispositions across all of your organisational content efficiently and effectively.

Uncontrolled collaboration can compromise information governance if deployment and access is not carefully planned and implemented. Compliance must be delivered seamlessly so that users have the flexibility to work and collaborate as needed. It needs to ensure they can access and use trusted corporate information while developing new content and intellectual property. This challenge is not an insignificant one.

Given these characteristics, it is not surprising that both public sector and highly regulated organisations choose Microsoft 365 along with Objective.

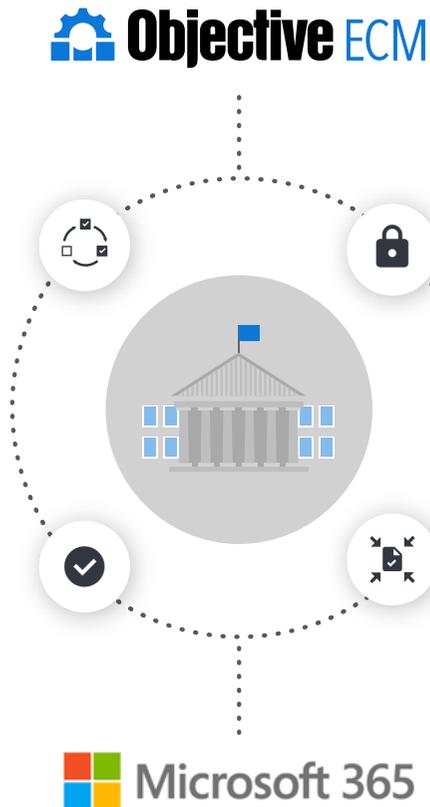


SECTION

3

**Government
Assessment**

Government Assessment



At first glance, it may appear that Microsoft 365 and Objective ECM have some areas of overlap. In reality, this is not the case when considering the context of the comparison.

Objective ECM is a commercial off the shelf (COTS) solution that has been purpose-built for government and highly regulated industries. It addresses the unique governance challenges agencies face, maintaining records and regulatory compliance, managing the full information lifecycle (when and how a record is created through to when it is disposed), protecting intellectual property, and maintaining a single source of truth across the entire agency.

Many government agencies across the UK, Australia, New Zealand, and the rest of the world have previously undertaken assessments of the Microsoft 365 platform's applicability within the unique, highly regulated and secure landscapes demanded of government information management workloads. They have found that Microsoft 365 requires additional 3rd party capabilities to fully comply with government recordkeeping practices.

Objective ECM integrates with Microsoft 365, enabling agencies to leverage their existing investments while providing enhanced information governance across Microsoft 365.

Analysis of Microsoft 365 by Government Agencies:

- **NSW State Records** documented that government departments have options to implement 3rd party add-ons, integrate with a separate EDRMS, or use another approach. ³
- **The Public Records Office of Victoria (PROV)** has stated, one of the effective ways records management can be achieved is by adding 3rd part add-ons or integrating with EDRMS or ECM. ⁴
- **NZ Archives** states one of the options for the move towards compliance is using 3rd party add-ons for information and records management (ECMS or EDRMS) functionality. ⁵
- **State Records of Western Australia** suggests that if SharePoint is to be used without a Microsoft add-on to manage audit logs, the logs must be downloaded manually every 90 days and stored in the system. ⁶

3. NSW Government State Archives & Records 'Office 365 and Recordkeeping' [Web Page](#). Accessed 11/03/2021

4. Public Records Office Victoria 'Microsoft 365' [Web Page](#). Accessed 11/03/2021

5. Archives New Zealand 'Microsoft 365' [Web Page](#). Accessed 11/03/2021

6. WA Government 'Records Management Advice - Information Management using SharePoint' [Web Page](#). Accessed 11/03/2021

Better Together

Since early 2020, the rate of customer take-up and adoption of the Microsoft 365 platform is unparalleled in Microsoft's history.

Currently sitting at 115 million users, Satya Nadella, Microsoft's CEO, describes Microsoft 365 as "the most strategic developer surface area for us."⁷ Satya also goes on to say "Microsoft 365 is the integrated suite of Graph connected productivity apps and experiences individuals rely on every day."⁸

While Microsoft 365 is relied upon for collaboration in this new, modern world of working, there is a need to consider information governance and how it is adequate for your agency. It is important to be mindful of the original premise for the implementation of these solutions; is it greater governance? Or is it greater collaboration that your agency is looking for? Or is it both? If it is both, then these solutions can work harmoniously, delivering the governance required while freeing users to collaborate as desired.

Objective Corporation is a Microsoft Gold certified partner. The Microsoft 365 platform attracts significant research and development effort from Objective's development teams.

7. Microsoft 'Leadership; Satya Nadella WPC 2014 Keynote' [Web Page](#). Accessed 12/03/2021

8. Microsoft 'Microsoft Ignite: Satya Nadella' PDF Document. [Accessed](#) 12/03/2021



Objective provides comprehensive capabilities that bring enhanced information and process governance to Microsoft products.



Teams Governance

Agencies can confidently embrace Microsoft Teams knowing that information and its context are captured within Objective ECM, including all files and conversations.



Email Governance

Automatically capture critical email content and attachments according to your governance requirements.



SharePoint Governance

Enable SharePoint users to actively participate in the comprehensive document lifecycle prescribed by Objective ECM platform.



Governed Co-Authoring

Bring governance to Microsoft's co-authoring capability in Microsoft 365. Provide users with a frictionless editing and co-authoring experience while controlling versions, history and security.



Power Automate

Provide users with a complete information picture by bringing content into their line of business applications to enable your staff to manage their content-driven tasks more effectively.



Objective has been helping government agencies increase user adoption of Microsoft Teams by providing another option for capturing their information as a record to comply with regulatory legislation and align with their internal recordkeeping policies.

Rachel Bondi

Microsoft Chief Partner Officer



Objective's long-standing commitment to research and development (R&D) is founded on an ethos to support local economies while delivering globally competitive software. Objective's solutions enable customers to become fully digital, while being entirely compliant to government records management, ensuring they can cost-effectively deliver services to their constituents.

The Objective suite of content solutions is built and developed specifically for the United Kingdom, Australian and New Zealand public sector and highly regulated industries. Regular customer input informs solution direction and as a result, Objective Gov365 has been developed to tightly integrate Objective ECM with Microsoft 365. Objective Gov365 delivers a modern user workspace that facilitates information and process collaboration directly from familiar applications such as SharePoint, Teams and Exchange, while providing an underpinning governance platform and common information repository.

The combination of Microsoft 365 and Objective ECM delivers a modern, collaborative workplace where end users can be confident of quality, trusted and intelligent information that is actionable within a secure environment. From an agency perspective, this combination provides significant out-of-the-box collaboration and governance capabilities thereby minimising the customisation and integration activities, and associated risks and costs, otherwise necessary to achieve similar business benefits and outcomes.

Gold
Microsoft Partner





We introduced workflow so we can enable our users to be more self-sufficient. They can do things that they want to do, but with underlying security checks. It makes a difference having the processes built into the system rather than us manually checking and chasing. It's really beneficial.

Fiona Eardley

Corporate Records Manager,
NatureScot



Trusted by hundreds of thousands of users, worldwide



Governance

Objective ECM provides a single governance approach to manage records across multiple systems for the entire agency, removing the onus from end users or business users. From a single platform, information governance policies are applied across enterprise content providing rich controls and enterprise-wide auditing and reporting. Information Governance policies are automatically applied while end users work in their familiar applications. Visibility of information is readily provided - from the moment a content item is created until its destruction.



Security

Ensure that records are kept secure and confidential. This applies to internal users, whether they are working in the office or elsewhere, as well as external users to your agency. These security controls must be in place for as long as the records lawfully need to be retained.



It hit all the marks. It made it so **Microsoft Teams owners had control** over what they bring across into Objective ECM. **It's done so simply and so easy** that you wouldn't even know that it's being done.

Deanna Fleming

Manager of Digital Workspace at
PIRSA



Scale

Objective ECM incorporates a highly scalable, content repository that can be physically distributed to support global operations while operating as a single logical solution for the application of governance policies. Deployment options include on-premise, in the cloud or in a hybrid deployment model.



Discoverability

No matter where the content was created, edited, collaborated on, you maintain consistent corporate records. With a single source of truth, the discoverability of information is timely, accurate, relevant and contextual. Search, and reporting capabilities are provided across content, irrelevant of where the information originated.



Consistent User Experience

Deliver a single, consistent user experience to both information managers and end users with effective, enterprise wide information management, applied consistently to all forms of critical business content; including emails, compound (linked) documents, images, videos and physical records.



Integration

Objective recognises that critical business content may be sourced from, and needs to be surfaced to, a wide variety of systems in addition to SharePoint/Microsoft 365. Objective offers a range of specific capture capabilities for email, images, scanning and even engineering drawings. Automatically capture, classify and securely dispose of records based on their content under the requirements of applicable records management legislation, standards and authorities.



Since we moved to the cloud, the reliability of Objective has been outstanding. Even tiny improvements can have a huge effect on people – and the **benefits that brings to the customer** are enormous.

Andy Parker

Senior Operation Manager,
Information & Records Management,
Welsh Government



Automation

The core strength of the Objective governance platform is that it incorporates a strong, flexible automation engine as an in-built component of the platform. This allows the automation of a wide range of information management tasks. All automated process activities are captured into the system audit trails ensuring there is a consistent, enterprise-wide view of all activity. Governed process automation provides users with trusted information where they can make consistent, evidence-based decisions.



Future-proof

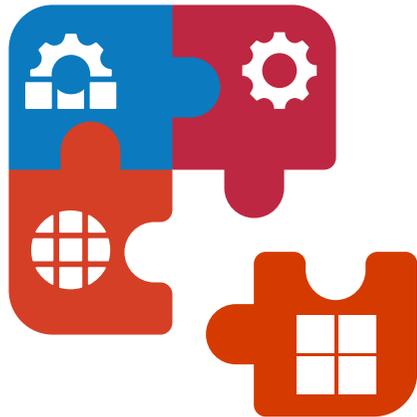
Complete and accurate information remains essential to government and the community. You must ensure data is appropriately managed as a record, regardless of the system where it was created. De-coupling the core information repository and governance processes from the end user collaboration environment provides your agency with a high degree of flexibility moving forward. Regardless of whether you are using SharePoint on-premise or, with Microsoft 365 (SharePoint Online) or other line of business systems, Objective ECM delivers a single governance platform. Providing government agencies with a high degree of flexibility to support variable rates of change without imposing content migration overheads and challenges.



Machinery of Government changes

Machinery of Government changes at an agency or business unit level are common occurrences throughout the term of a political party, or even during a term of government. Objective ECM ensures specified data can be transferred securely for ingestion into any supported Records Compliant Content Services platform.

Objective and Microsoft 365



Drawing from 30 years of experience designing, building and implementing software for the public sector and other highly regulated industries, Objective has created a robust portfolio of Content Solutions.

These provide information and process governance capabilities that are effortless to use and enable agencies to advance their digital transformation confidently. These solutions turn the imperative of compliance, accountability and governance into an opportunity to streamline business processes and deliver the innovative services citizens expect.

The combination of Microsoft 365 and Objective delivers a modern, collaborative workplace where team members work in familiar applications with trusted information. Simultaneously, the broader agency benefits from a complete and accurate picture of all information.

Digital government.
Stronger communities.

Objective

We create software that makes a difference.

Using Objective software, thousands of public sector organisations are developing policies with impact, accelerating processes and delivering innovative services.

We help organisations shift to being completely digital. Where our customers can work from anywhere; with access to information, governance guaranteed, and security assured.

Innovation is our lifeblood. We invest significantly in the ongoing development of our products to deliver outstanding solutions to the public sector and regulated industries.

The result - stronger outcomes for communities and accountability that builds trust in government.

objective.com