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SharePoint 2016: An Investment with Powerful Returns, or an Expense You Don't Need?

Some SharePoint® users still claim there is no big difference between this and the previous release, while others point to potentially huge differences in what they see as critical areas.

So who's right?

Only an organization looking at the available options, paying attention or not paying attention, can make what will ultimately prove to be the right or wrong decision. Let's look at some SharePoint 2016 potential pros and cons.

Potential Upside

Those aware of SharePoint 2016 as "hybrid at the core" should look into what that could mean for their businesses, but also beyond that to discover what else the new release is. With its Zero Downtime feature, better scalability, enhanced file management and, importantly, improved UX (user experience), SharePoint 2016 could enhance your communication and collaboration needs substantially.



The Need for Stability and Speed

Upgrading from SharePoint 2013 to SharePoint 2016 is faster and simpler than upgrading from SharePoint 2010 to SharePoint 2013; and it's ultimately more stable. More on that [here](#). Also, search is faster and new and quicker ways to create site and site collections are also available.

File Management

When a document is moved to a different location, SharePoint 2016 ensures the links that pointed to that document will update automatically. Users are also able to name files using special characters, such as tilde, curly brackets and the ampersand, while also having file names longer than 128 characters.

Scalability

Slowdown is often an issue when SharePoint is scaled up for more users and/or content. SharePoint 2016 fixes the issue, which should be taken onboard if you're growing quickly or anticipating growth and wish to avoid problems in the future. Maximum file size, list view threshold, limit on index items have all been increased so that large quantities of data will be easier to manage. With that in mind:

Zero Downtime

Zero Downtime is enabled when the server is set up with a MinRole topology, or rather a topology with high availability. More on that [here](#). Software updates come without any compromise of service level agreements and the promise of minimized downtime and user disruption.

Hybrid

SQL Server 2016 has been touted as "the first database born in the cloud" and it backs that up with a complete database platform for hybrid cloud. Your business has the option to build, deploy and manage solutions across on-premises and cloud - with compute capacity, virtually infinite storage and "Always Encrypted" technology for data protection.

Enhanced UX

End User adoption is a big issue for many, so SharePoint 2016 introduces changes to the user interface to hopefully help solve the problem. Elements from Office 365, like the Office 365 ribbon and the App Launcher, along with a touch-friendly interface for mobile devices, bring SharePoint into the new age of mobility and provide work-from-anywhere flexibility.

Because your business is unique, you do need to get past all the hype and the sweeping statements about SharePoint 2016 and get down to the details. Only then will you really know if this investment of time and money has the kind of potential returns to make it worthwhile. Each positive and each negative is only really big or small based on your needs, strategies, and long-term goals.

Potential downside

Let's make a nice, easy start and talk money. What does this investment cost? A good question if you're ever going to evaluate the potential returns for your business. Items to consider would be, for example, migration of data and content, employee training and user-adoption of new elements, buying or upgrading licenses.

For an investment many describe as not much different than previous versions, the cumulative time-and-cost factor for the above examples may be a decider. But is this version really not much different?

Foundation

As most readers of Bamboo Nation will almost certainly know, SharePoint Foundation is the free, limited capability on-prem SharePoint deployment - and not available with the new release. This could be seen from the point of view that WSS/Foundation was initially designed to create an easy entry into the world of SharePoint; something that is now being covered by Office 365.

Single Server, anyone?

Installing software on a single server has been possible with SharePoint - until now. SQL needs its own server. You may have the option, though, of cloud server installation. Of course, the balancing question would be: What does SQL give my business? See the section above or read more [here](#).

Customized Workflows

Companies with unique requirements (Are there really any without those?), and who have opted for third-party software apps, may find tools to be either incompatible with SharePoint 2016, or requiring upgrade license fees. Again, balancing out the pros and cons of ROI against time and cost is advisable.

SharePoint Designer and InfoPath

The word "depreciation" has been swirling around Designer and InfoPath for a long time, but it really boils down to the fact there is no new client version of either. Still, if you use Designer 2013 (Quick Tip: Visual Studio and PowerShell!) and InfoPath 2013, Microsoft will support them through 2026.

Excel Services

Excel Services and its associated intelligence capabilities will not be hosted on SharePoint Server; however, Excel Services functionality is part of Excel Online in Office Online Server. Learn [more](#).

For more information on what's deprecated or removed from SharePoint 2016, go [here](#).

For more information on new and improved features in SharePoint 2016, go [here](#).

To learn more about our SharePoint 2016 solutions, go [here](#).

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