Top reasons why Office 365 migrations often fail

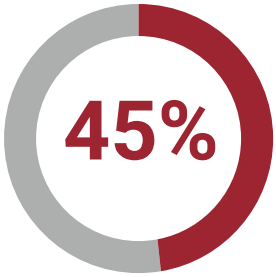
Too many IT organizations, under pressure from the top brass to get Office 365 deployed, find themselves running into problems in the midst of the migration. Even those who invested in upgrades and planned for the increased connections and bandwidth usage are running into latency problems.

In this document, we'll tackle the reasons for common migration problems and, to help you get on the road to success, we'll offer tips for avoiding or overcoming these challenges.

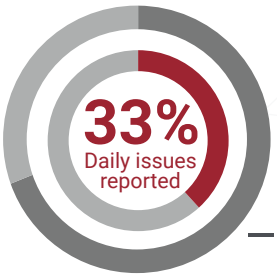
Migration problems? You're not alone.

In a **Tech Validate** survey of 200 companies, nearly 70 percent of companies experienced weekly bandwidth congestion or latency issues after deploying Office 365.

Despite appliance upgrades, after deployment



reported **problems accessing business-critical applications** including Office 365



were **plagued by bandwidth and network latency** issues on a daily and weekly basis

Why? Because most doubled down on their existing network infrastructure and gateway appliances. But, upgrading firewalls and adding bandwidth are not what Microsoft recommends for deploying Office 365.

In its **official connectivity guidance** for Office 365, Microsoft recommends direct internet connections. Here are the four principles underpinning this guidance:

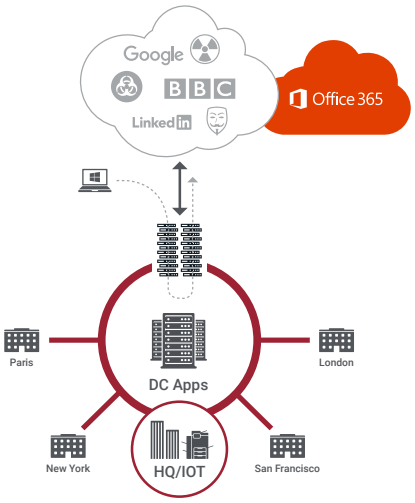
- Identify and differentiate Office 365 traffic and prioritize it over other network traffic
- Egress Office 365 as close to the user with matching DNS resolution to get onto the Microsoft network right away
- Avoid network hairpins and optimize direct connectivity
- Assess bypassing proxies and other inspection devices

Zscaler has worked closely with Microsoft and hundreds of customers using Office 365, and we'd like to share common problems companies encounter and tips from Microsoft for avoiding them.

PROBLEM #1

RELYING ON YOUR LEGACY HUB-AND-SPOKE NETWORK

Most large organizations rely on a hub-and-spoke network to route traffic from branch offices through a central data center where applications are housed and security controls are applied. So, it's reasonable to think that you could use those same pipes for Office 365, right? Think again.



Hub-and-Spoke Network

Microsoft recommends against using a hub-and-spoke network with Office 365

Cloud apps like Skype and SharePoint are designed for low-latency direct access

Hub-and-spoke and VPN requirements add unnecessary latency

The user experience for Office 365 is compromised

MPLS backhauling adds extra cost to deployment

Cloud applications dramatically increase the number of network transactions through the gateway and they strain backhauled MPLS links and security overlays in legacy networks.

Office 365, in particular, creates a high number of long-lived sessions that quickly exhaust firewall ports—often, there are 12 to 20 connections per user. When enterprise users of Office 365 don't have direct access to the internet, they are more likely to experience random hangs and connection issues.

Tip from Microsoft

Avoid VPNs and other network hairpins that drastically effect the latency and performance of Office 365 connections. Optimize your Office 365 user experience by always delivering a local user connection into the Microsoft's Global network.

PROBLEM #2

DIRECT INTERNET CONNECTIONS WITH APPLIANCES

If you are supposed to avoid backhauling traffic, then you should connect all branches directly to the internet and secure them locally. But deploying appliances at each branch is expensive, and a real pain to deploy and maintain.

Challenges with appliances

- Requires constant firewall updates, and missing a single IP or URL update will cause connectivity issues
- Requires appliance capacity assessments to ensure they can handle the high number of long-lived connections
- Due to the cost, often requires security tradeoffs in branches with only UTMs or firewalls for security

Tip from Microsoft

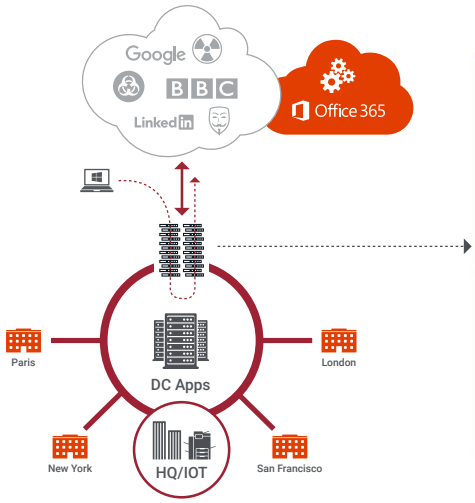
Assess bypassing traffic inspection proxy appliances that add latency and slow Office 365 application performance. Microsoft also recommends to avoid duplicating security measures which are already available within Office 365.

PROBLEM #3

KEEPING UP WITH OFFICE 365 ADMINISTRATION

IT teams often think moving to the cloud is going to simplify their lives. While on some level this is true, cloud applications still require daily administration. In the case of Office 365, it's essential.

The challenges of keeping up with Office 365 updates



Hub-and-Spoke Network

https://support.office.com/en-us/o365ip/rss

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89 changes from Jan-July 2018!
That's an average of 12 per month

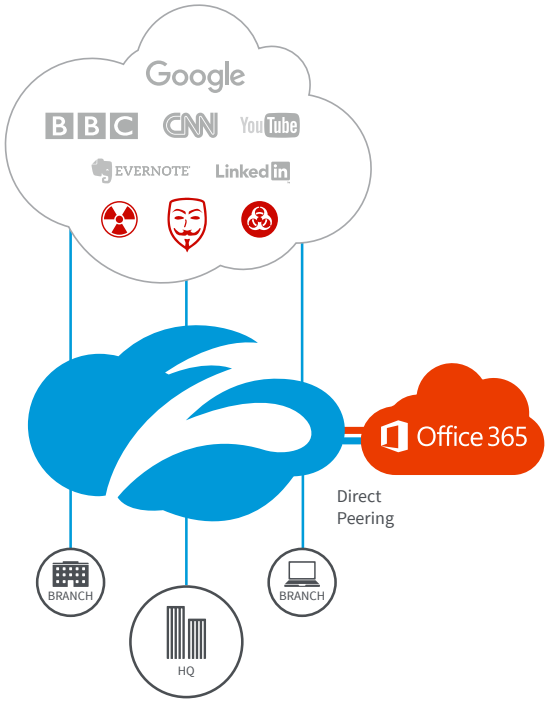
The Microsoft network comprises hundreds of connection points, which change frequently. As connection points change, it is important to mirror these down into your Office 365 installation, so users are always connecting to the latest access locations. This can be a time-consuming task for IT departments to perform manually, and even more so across multiple appliances and gateways.

Office 365 Tip

In order to keep Office 365 administration costs down, embrace a connection solution that automates Microsoft Network Front Door changes. This will simplify the day to day IT process and always guarantee users are accessing the Office 365 on the latest and fastest connections.

Zscaler for Office 365 and direct internet

What Office 365 customers like about Zscaler's offering is our ability deliver a fast and secure direct internet experience for Office 365 and internet traffic. By using Zscaler, you can break out from the corporate network and optimize the path to the Microsoft cloud.



Quick deployment

Because there's no hardware or software to upgrade prior to deployment, you can be up and running in minutes.

One-click configuration

Automatically configure Office 365 connection requirements with a single click.

Bandwidth control

Prioritize Office 365 to ensure that business-critical traffic takes precedence over recreational activities.

Avoid hardware refreshes

The Zscaler cloud has unlimited capacity to scale as your user demands grow. Appliances just can't compete with that.

More resources

If you want to know more details on the unique challenges of an Office 365 deployment, we invite you to **check out this webinar**. It takes a deeper dive into the common deployment hurdles and network changes you need to make for the best Office 365 results.

softwerx

About Zscaler

Zscaler enables organizations to securely transform their networks and applications for a mobile and cloud-first world. Zscaler connects users to applications and cloud services, regardless of device, location, or network, while providing comprehensive security and a fast user experience. All without costly, complex gateway appliances.

zscaler™