



10

nonprofit
technology
myths debunked

Let's clear up common misconceptions about what the cloud means for nonprofits

Many nonprofits consider moving to the cloud to help them with their biggest organizational challenge—to do more with less. As their staff, donations, and volunteers lose ground against increasing demands for resources and benefits, nonprofits are stretched thin and looking for new ways to close that gap. Cloud technologies provide a flexible, more affordable, and secure solution to achieve that.

But how can you be sure your nonprofit will gain the advantages of the cloud without giving anything up?

If your organization has been considering new technology solutions in the cloud, you may have found inconsistencies in your research that make it difficult to separate fact from fiction. Those conflicting views and preconceived ideas make it easy for misconceptions to prevent your organization from gaining the advantages that the cloud offers.

This e-book provides facts to help you make the right decisions about what cloud technologies—including Microsoft 365 Business Premium and Microsoft Azure—can do for your nonprofit. Read on to clear up the most common nonprofit-specific myths about moving to the cloud. With the facts, you can feel confident about switching to the cloud and how it can empower your staff to work together securely and effectively—no matter where they're located or what devices they're using.



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nonprofit technology myths debunked

- Myth #1** Tech is just an IT problem.
- Myth #2** The cloud is expensive.
- Myth #3** Migrating to the cloud is too complicated for a nonprofit like mine.
- Myth #4** Working in the cloud means everyone needs an internet connection to use the apps.
- Myth #5** Continuous updates will break our critical business applications and add to the IT burden.
- Myth #6** Keeping data on-premises is safer than keeping it in the cloud.
- Myth #7** There's nothing I can personally do about security.
- Myth #8** Learning new technology requires training that isn't in our budget.
- Myth #9** IT must be the data gatekeeper.
- Myth #10** New technology and automation will eliminate jobs.

Myth #1

Tech is just an IT problem.



Fact

Cloud technology is integral to improving every aspect of your nonprofit, because tech powers mission-critical efficiencies that benefit more than just IT.

The cloud powers all kinds of mission-critical efficiencies that can make your organization more productive even as resources are stretched thin. Cloud solutions such as Microsoft Azure and Microsoft 365 Business Premium make it easier and more affordable for all parts of your organization—from fundraising and volunteer management to program participant support—to access those benefits without requiring a huge, dedicated IT department.

With Microsoft 365 Business Premium, your team can do their best work by:

- Working productively from anywhere on any device with familiar Office 365 applications for email, content creation, data analysis, and much more.
- Collaborating easily and securely on any device with coworkers and volunteers located around the globe.
- Meeting effectively online, sharing screens, and brainstorming on a virtual whiteboard in Teams.
- Trusting that their activities are protected by strong yet transparent security.



Myth #2

The cloud is expensive.



Fact

Microsoft offers grants and discounts across our cloud products and services to eligible nonprofits around the world that can significantly reduce the costs of running your workloads in the cloud.

These offerings include:

- Microsoft 365 Business Premium, available free to eligible nonprofits for your first 10 users and at a 75% discount for each additional user.
- Access \$3,500 (USD) Azure services credits per year across the complete portfolio of Azure products and cloud services for qualified nonprofits.
- The Azure Hybrid Benefit: Significantly reduce the cost of running your workloads in the cloud by transitioning your on-premises Software Assurance-enabled Windows Server and SQL Server licenses to Azure. This benefit now also applies to RedHat and SUSE Linux subscriptions.
- Dynamics 365 Sales Enterprise, free for up to 5 users and discounted pricing available for additional users.
- Power Apps, now free for up to 10 users and discounted pricing available for additional users.

Myth #3

Migrating to the cloud is too complicated for a nonprofit like mine.



Fact

Microsoft Tech for Social Impact (TSI) and our robust partner network are here to smooth the path.



It's understandable that the thought of moving your data to the cloud could seem daunting to some nonprofits that already have their hands full serving a growing number of needs with a shrinking number of resources. What you may not know is that you don't have to move everything at once—or at all. You can ease your way into the cloud and keep some workloads on premises if you prefer.

A relatively quick and easy first step is to deploy Microsoft 365 Business Premium throughout your organization. Microsoft 365 Business Premium brings together best-in-class Office apps and powerful cloud services with comprehensive security that helps protect your organization against advanced cyber threats.

Microsoft and a deep bench of nonprofit tech partners are available to help you choose from a variety of migration paths to suit your needs. We'll also provide information and tips on a range of details. In most cases, you can use your existing tools and processes throughout the transition, without interrupting day-to-day operations.

You can also take advantage of online tools, such as FastTrack for Microsoft 365, which helps organizations accelerate deployment and end-user adoption while minimizing the impact on your hardworking staff. Microsoft engineers deliver FastTrack to help you migrate to the cloud at your own pace and get access to qualified partners if you need additional services.

Myth #4

Working in the cloud means everyone needs an internet connection to use the apps.



Fact

Microsoft 365 is a cloud-based solution that includes full downloadable desktop versions of familiar Office apps.

Microsoft 365 Business Premium keeps all your teams in touch and productive on the go on any Windows, Mac, iOS, or Android device. The subscription includes downloadable desktop versions of Office applications and an optimized mobile experience for smartphones and tablets. This means your staff can work productively and securely, whether online or offline, using tools that are always up to date.

For example, employees and volunteers working in the field, who have access to an internet connection, can communicate, collaborate, and securely share files and folders with other team members in real time. In areas where they don't have access to Wi-Fi, they can work offline on documents, read and respond to stored emails, and review and set calendar appointments on their mobile device.

When their device reconnects to the internet, emails are sent automatically, their calendar is updated, and the latest version of documents are uploaded to OneDrive. Your staff is back working in real time and has access to the most up-to-date version of documents.

Built with integrated, end-to-end security, compliance, and identity solutions, Microsoft 365 Business Premium helps ensure that your organization's data and valuable donor information are protected against every new threat—from phishing to malware and ransomware—across all devices.



Myth #5

Continuous updates will break our critical business applications and add to the IT burden.



Fact

Continuous updates with Microsoft 365 won't negatively impact your existing applications. You still have total control over your technology, but your IT department won't have to worry about constant updates.

To further your organization's mission, your employees and volunteers must be able to use business-critical apps and add-ins with Office. To ensure compatibility between Microsoft 365 and the other tools your people use every day, we:

- Ensure that in the cloud all users have the latest and greatest version of the familiar Office desktop applications.
- Work hard to ensure that even as we update Office on a regular basis in the cloud, the updates do not impact other software applications.
- Collaborate closely with leading software vendors and provide them with tools and early access to ensure that their Office-compatible solutions continue to work with Microsoft 365.
- Provide nonprofits with guidance and best practices for update management and development to help you avoid compatibility issues.

In addition to ensuring that you have the most up-to-date tools and security, moving to the cloud significantly reduces the time spent maintaining hardware and upgrading software. Now your IT team can focus on making technology more productive for your organization rather than being a repair service. And the gained efficiencies will give your managers and staff more time to create initiatives for fundraising and outreach.

Myth #6

Keeping data on-premises is safer than keeping it in the cloud.



Fact

Security and uptime come standard with Microsoft 365, which provides a financially backed 99.9% uptime guarantee.

With the growing number of cyberattacks that occur each day, it's nearly impossible for any organization to assemble a security team large enough to stay ahead of them all. Microsoft provides a comprehensive set of security technologies to help protect your nonprofit's critical data. These include:

- **Microsoft Defender for Office 365 Plan 2**—Updated to include best-in-class threat investigation and response tools to help you anticipate, understand, and prevent malicious attacks.
- **Microsoft Defender for Endpoint**—An endpoint security platform that provides preventative threat protection, post-breach detection, and automated investigation.
- **Microsoft 365 Defender**—Ties in to the Microsoft 365 security portfolio to automatically analyze threat data across domains and build a complete picture of a cyberattack in a single dashboard.
- **Microsoft Azure Sentinel**—A scalable, cloud-based security solution that enables you to collect data across all users, devices, apps, and infrastructure, both on-premises and in multiple clouds, and detect and respond quickly to multi-stage attackers.
- **Microsoft Azure Security Center**—A unified infrastructure security management system that strengthens the security posture of your Azure environment and enables you to visualize your security state through Secure Score recommendations.

Together, these security features help you:

- Manage identity and access for secure connections between people, devices, apps, and data.
- Protect your sensitive data everywhere, even in motion and when shared.
- Detect and investigate advanced threats, compromised identities, and malicious actions across your on-premises and cloud environments.
- Provide greater visibility into your cloud apps and services so you can control how data travels and combat cyberthreats more effectively.

The Microsoft dedicated security team uses a wide range of processes to comply with the pinnacle of industry standards. These include the Security Development Lifecycle, traffic throttling, and preventing, detecting, and mitigating breaches at an enterprise level. We also employ industry-leading regulatory compliance experts who stay up to date on the latest local and global security and privacy regulations.

Not sure where to start? Check out the Microsoft [Security Program for Nonprofits](#). It offers a comprehensive set of security offerings that assess organizational risk, provide proactive monitoring and notification, and training.



Myth #7

There's nothing I
can personally do
about security.



Fact

Everyone in the organization plays a role in security.

Often, technology isn't what keeps the IT team up at night. People are. A potentially devastating data breach can occur with a single mouse click.

Every organization is only as strong as its weakest link, so it's important for your staff and volunteers to learn how to identify and respond to threats. [The 2021 Verizon Data Breach Investigations Report](#) revealed that 85 percent of data breaches involved a human element, whether it was intentional or not.

You can protect against human error by using the security features in Microsoft 365 Business Premium to create and apply a consistent set of security settings designed specifically for your organization. The ability to automatically enforce universal policies will help you reduce your nonprofit's risk profile even across personal devices that employees and volunteers use for your projects.



Myth #8

Learning new technology requires training that isn't in our budget.



Fact

Microsoft has a robust training program available to nonprofits at no—or low—cost.

Our goal is to equip nonprofits around the world with not only the best technology but also the skills to harness that technology to increase their impact. To support that training goal, we're proud to partner with TechSoup in the Microsoft [Digital Skills Center for Nonprofits](#). This center is dedicated to helping advance digital skills for nonprofit organizations of all sizes.

You can empower your staff to advance your mission with cloud-powered technology by taking advantage of many free and low cost nonprofit-specific courses, demos, and trainings. You'll find self paced and instructor-led options on Microsoft 365, Azure, Power Platform, and more—all categorized by experience level to ensure that your users get the appropriate training for their needs. These courses help you get the most value possible from both new Microsoft solutions and those you're already using.



Myth #9

IT must be the
data gatekeeper.



Fact

Microsoft 365 makes it easy for even non-technical authorized users to securely access and share digital information without a gatekeeper or outside help, saving valuable time.

Data democratization empowers the entire organization by putting the data you need at your fingertips, regardless of your role. It makes digital information accessible to all authorized users, regardless of where or when they are working or on what devices. Azure services enhance data discoverability and enable your organization to deliver many data collection and sharing innovations with little technical investment.

Microsoft 365 Business Premium makes it easy for external staff and supporters to feel connected. Team members can easily build collaboration spaces on Microsoft Teams for specific projects or for specific groups without requiring IT intervention. This expedites volunteer recruitment, onboarding, and engagement, and empowers staff to deliver more effective programming. It can help your fundraising team attract, retain, and grow donors. And it can support more productive connections between your organization and external partners around the world.

As a result, staff and volunteers can access the important data they need when they need it without having to ask IT for help or navigate multiple convoluted backend systems that can hinder productivity.

Myth #10

New technology
and automation will
eliminate jobs.



Fact

Cloud technology and automation significantly reduce the amount of manual work burdening your staff, freeing them up to be more productive and spend more time helping your constituents.

The goal of automating solutions is not to reduce staff, but rather to allow people to focus more on the tasks that only people can do. We often hear from nonprofits that there just isn't enough time in the day to get everything done. By automating tasks and embracing cloud technology, your staff will be able to do more in the precious hours they have.

Microsoft has developed several solutions that eliminate a significant amount of manual work and enable nonprofits to extend their outreach with the same number of staff.



The cloud is ready when you are.



Get started with the Microsoft 365 Business Premium Grant

Microsoft 365 with Microsoft Teams can help your nonprofit improve cybersecurity, reduce costs, and empower staff and volunteers to work from anywhere. Available free for up to 10 users, and at a 75% discount for additional users.

[Get started](#)

Move to the cloud with the Azure Grant

Take advantage of \$3,500 (USD) in Azure services credits per year and access the complete portfolio of Azure cloud solutions and services.

[Learn more](#)

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