Features of Microsoft Online Services

Exchange Online is one of several services hosted by Microsoft and available from Microsoft Online Services. These Internet-based offerings are designed to make it easier for businesses to rapidly and cost effectively access up-to-date communications and collaboration technologies.

Each service delivers business-class reliability and reduces the burden of performing routine IT management tasks such as installation, provisioning, ongoing maintenance, patches, updates, and upgrades.

Exchange Online subscribers benefit from a set of features that are common to all Microsoft Online Services offerings:

- **Secure access:** Microsoft Online Services are accessed via 128-bit Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) encryption. Anyone who intercepts a communication sees only encrypted text.

- **Business continuity:** Redundant network architecture is hosted at geographically dispersed Microsoft data centers to handle unscheduled service outages. Data centers act as backups for each other: If one fails, the affected customers are transferred to another data center with limited interruption of service.

- **Intrusion monitoring:** Microsoft continuously monitors the Microsoft Online Services systems for any unusual or suspicious activity. If Microsoft detects such activity, it investigates and responds appropriately. In the unlikely event that a significant incident occurs, the customer is notified.

- **Security audits:** Ongoing assessment of the Microsoft Online Services infrastructure ensures installation of the latest compliance policies and antivirus signatures, along with high-level configuration settings and required security updates.

- **High availability:** Microsoft Online Services have a 99.9 percent scheduled uptime. If a customer's service is affected, Microsoft Online Services offers financial remedies subject to the terms and conditions of the service level agreement (SLA).

- **Support:** Web form and phone support is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for the service administrator.

- **Administration Center:** This easy-to-use web site is made available to company service administrators for managing all Microsoft Online Services. After logging on to the Administration Center, service administrators can perform a number of common tasks such as adding and deleting users, adding contacts and distribution lists in Exchange Online, and creating and configuring Microsoft SharePoint® Online sites. The Administration Center is also where service administrators can download software such as the Microsoft Online Services Sign In application, Directory Synchronization tool, and Migration tools.

- **My Company Portal:** Users can log on to the My Company Portal Web site to launch Microsoft Online Services. They can access services such as e-mail, create a SharePoint site, download the Sign In application—and more.

- **Sign In application:** This tool conveniently allows Microsoft Online Services end users to sign in once and access all services without being prompted repeatedly for their password.

- **Virus filtering:** Microsoft Online Services helps guard against online threats. Microsoft Forefront Online Security for Exchange automatically removes viruses and spam in incoming and outgoing e-mail. Microsoft Forefront Security for SharePoint scans for viruses in intracompany e-mail and in all documents that reside in SharePoint Online sites.

- **Directory Synchronization tool:** For subscribers with on-premises Active Directory® service deployment, this tool helps keep the on-premises Active Directory and the Microsoft Online Services directory in sync.