About this document:

**Purpose:** This document is intended to help IT leaders at educational institutions understand Microsoft storage policies and effectively manage their school’s storage consumption for Microsoft 365 applications. It focuses on (but is not limited to) storage management for OneDrive, SharePoint, and Exchange, and it provides step-by-step guidance to help you:

- Understand Microsoft storage changes and how much storage your school is allocated
- Determine how much storage your school is consuming within OneDrive, SharePoint, and Exchange
- Set and toggle storage limits for OneDrive, SharePoint, and Exchange
- Identify and delete inactive users, files, and data from OneDrive, SharePoint, Exchange, and additional applications
- Understand initial options for expanding your storage capacity, if needed
- Implement best practices for storage management at your school

**Audience:** IT and system managers at K-12 and higher education institutions.

**Terminology:** All K-12 and higher education institutions are collectively referred to as “schools.”

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2. Introduction
4. Review your storage usage and consumption
7. Manage and implement storage limits
9. Reduce your storage and manage the user and identity lifecycle
11. Expand your storage
12. Implement best practices
Microsoft 365 storage guidelines

Beginning at contract renewal (no sooner than August 1, 2024) all school tenants will receive **100TB of free pooled storage***

Microsoft 365 and Office 365 A3 and A5 customers will get an additional **50GB and 100GB of pooled storage** per paid user, respectively

New storage tools will provide **greater visibility** into your pooled storage and help you better manage storage across services

Effective Feb 1, 2024, Office 365 A1 free users will have a **maximum limit of 100GB OneDrive storage***

Additional **storage packs** will be available for purchase

*In addition to the new A1 OneDrive limit, A1 users will continue to have a maximum limit of 50GB for their primary Exchange mailbox and 50GB for their archive mailbox.

What is pooled storage?

In a pooled storage environment, individual storage resources are grouped together and managed as a single entity. Pooled storage is often used in environments where there’s a need for flexible and scalable storage capacities, such as schools.

What are the benefits of effective information management?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reduce security risk</th>
<th>Minimize environmental impact</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimize security risk created by legacy storage and data sprawl</td>
<td>Reduce our collective carbon footprint</td>
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<tr>
<td>Globally, Education and Research is #1 most attacked industry.¹</td>
<td>Over half of stored data does not serve a purpose. This “dark data” takes up space on servers and results in increased electricity consumption, generating 4% of global greenhouse gas emissions in 2020 alone.³</td>
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<td>K-12 schools receive over 80% of workplace malware attacks.²</td>
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¹ ITP.net, August 2022 ² Microsoft ³ World Economic Forum
1 Review your storage usage and consumption

Microsoft 365 admin storage reports

The first step in managing your data is understanding your total tenant storage consumption and quota. See how to find your storage consumption across SharePoint, OneDrive and Exchange below:

How to:
1. Navigate to the admin center
2. Expand the Reports tab on the left
3. Click on Storage

How is your total capacity calculated?
Your storage capacity or quota = 100TB base capacity for using Microsoft 365, plus...
+ 50GB per paid A3 license
+ 100GB per paid A5 license
+ Any storage packs you’ve added

What does the reports dashboard include?
In the dashboard, you can view:
- Total storage consumption
- Total pooled storage limit
- Storage consumption by service (OneDrive, SharePoint, and Exchange)
- Capacity warnings and errors if approaching or over capacity

The following reports are also available in the admin center to help you view the storage consumption of objects within OneDrive, SharePoint and Exchange. You can leverage these reports during planning to identify sites that may be impacted by new quotas, as well as identify and send proactive notifications to users approaching or over capacity.

Largest OneDrive, SharePoint, and Exchange sites & mailboxes

These reports provide a list of the largest 1000 OneDrive, SharePoint, and Exchange sites and mailboxes in your tenant. For each site or mailbox, they show the last activity date, storage consumption, and limit. OneDrive’s report also displays the site owner; SharePoint’s adds the site name and URL; and Exchange’s lists the mailbox owner.

These reports can be exported as CSVs. Learn more
1 Review your storage usage and consumption

Microsoft 365 admin usage reports

The following usage reports give you a listing of all OneDrive and SharePoint sites in your tenant with an indication of activity over time. For example, you can identify which sites are consuming the most storage, are approaching or over their quota, or may have been inactive. They can then be managed, archived, or deleted.

Reports for OneDrive
Get a more detailed picture of OneDrive site usage within your organization. This report contains site listings, site owners, storage used, and the last activity date for each site. This enables you to determine the amount of storage consumed and any sites that are not actively being used. Learn more

How to:
1. In the Microsoft 365 admin center, go to the Reports > Usage page > OneDrive > Site usage tab

Reports for SharePoint
View a more in-depth picture of SharePoint site usage within your organization. This report features site listings, site owners, storage allocated and used, and the last activity date for each site. This helps you to understand the amount of storage consumed and any sites that are not actively being used. Learn more

How to:
1. In the Microsoft 365 admin center, go to the Reports > Usage page > SharePoint > Site usage tab

Additional resources:
- Microsoft 365 admin center activity reports
- About Microsoft 365 usage analytics
- Customize the reports in Microsoft 365 usage analytics
- Which activity reports are available in the admin center
- How to view usage information for a specific user
Review your storage usage and consumption

Microsoft 365 admin usage reports

The following Exchange report gives you a listing of all Exchange mailboxes in your tenant with an indication of activity over time. The Active Users Report gives you a listing of users in your organization and their last activity date for core services like OneDrive, SharePoint, Exchange, and Teams. This provides a user-centric view with activity data so you can identify inactive users.

**Reports for Exchange**

See a more detailed picture of Exchange mailbox usage within your organization. This report shows mailbox listings, recipient type (user, group, shared), storage used, the send and receive quotas, the recoverable item quota and if the mailbox has an archive. This information helps you plan quota management and mailbox cleanup. Learn more

**Active User Report**

Get a more in-depth view of Active Users within your organization. This report contains activity data for users across core Microsoft 365 services like OneDrive, SharePoint, Exchange, and Teams. This information enables you to identify inactive users based on a particular date or range of dates. Learn more

**How to:**

1. In the Microsoft 365 admin center, go to **Reports > Usage > Exchange > Mailbox usage**

**How to:**

1. In the Microsoft 365 admin center, go to **Reports > Usage > Office 365 > Active users**

Run ad-hoc PowerShell Reports

All of the information available in the usage reports and more is also available through PowerShell with the following commands:

- **Get-SPOSite**: Returns one or more SharePoint site collections including OneDrive
- **Get-SPOTenant**: Returns SharePoint Online organization properties
- **Get-Mailbox**: Returns mailbox objects and attributes
- **Get-MailboxStatistics**: Returns information about mailbox size and message count
2 Manage and implement storage limits

Define data storage limits

Setting storage limits is a critical step in managing your school’s storage consumption, as it caps the amount of data individual users can store. You can set storage limits for users in OneDrive, SharePoint, and Exchange to ensure they don’t exceed their individual storage allotment and help your school stay under its total storage capacity.

Set and modify OneDrive limits

Manage OneDrive storage consumption by setting limits on users’ OneDrive. By default, each user will receive a 1TB limit (except for A1 users, who will receive 100GB limit.) Now, IT admins can set and manage OneDrive limits more granularly, based on group membership. Specific groups of students and/or faculty can be configured differently with ease, using the same groups utilized for other IT policies and configurations throughout Microsoft 365.

How to:
1. In the Microsoft 365 admin center, go to Reports > Storage > Manage storage
2. Pick your groups and assign your limits

Additional resources:
- Set default storage limit for OneDrive users
- Change a user's OneDrive limit
- Set default OneDrive limit using PowerShell
- View the list of OneDrive URLs

Configure SharePoint limits

You can configure SharePoint limits to define how much storage can be consumed for each site. Use these instructions to manage your SharePoint storage limits.

How to:
1. In the SharePoint admin center, go to Settings > Site storage limits > Manual
2. To set individual site limits:
   Go to Active sites > select a site > Storage > set a site limit > Save

Additional resources:
- Manage SharePoint site storage limits
- Manage site creation in SharePoint
- Recommended secure document policies
2 Manage and implement storage limits

Configure Mailbox limits

Configure mailbox limits to manage and prevent unexpected growth. The default limit for user mailboxes is determined by the user's assigned service plan but can always be adjusted down as needed. Learn more

How to review Exchange usage:
1. In the Microsoft 365 admin center, select Reports > Usage > Exchange > Mailbox usage

Which mailboxes count towards pooled storage?
- User mailboxes
- Group mailboxes
- Shared mailboxes

Archive mailboxes (and others) do not count towards pooled storage.

Additional resources:
- Set mailbox limits
- Set mailbox limits via PowerShell
- Configure mailbox plans in Exchange Online
- Block large file attachments
- Enable archive mailboxes, archive policy, and deleted item retention policy
- Set group-based mailbox policies
3 Reduce your storage

Use storage efficiently

Taking steps to reduce your storage consumption before your organization has reached its limit is crucial when managing your storage efficiently and effectively. We recommend limiting Teams recording retention, enabling archive mailboxes, implementing a deleted item retention policy, and deleting inactive users in bulk to reduce your overall storage profile.

Delete inactive users

Delete in bulk

Use the Entra Admin Center to delete users in bulk with a simple comma-separated values (CSV) file. Learn more

How to:
1. Navigate to Azure Active Directory > Users > All users > Bulk operations > Bulk delete
2. Download the CSV template and add a row for each user you want to delete
3. Upload the CSV file > click submit and verify completion

Additional resources:
- Restore a deleted user
- Restore users in bulk
- Close an account in an unmanaged directory

Set group expiration policies

Microsoft 365 group expiration policies will automatically remove inactive groups from your system. When a group expires and is deleted, its associated storage in SharePoint and Exchange is also deleted. Learn more

How to:
1. Azure Active Directory > Groups > Expiration

Group expiry is turned off by default. To enable it, go to:

Additional resources:
- Delete users in bulk
- Group expiration policy

What happens to deleted users?

When you delete a user's account, Microsoft will delete that user's data within 30 days. Deleted users will still be included in the Activity chart for the periods they were active, but they'll no longer appear in the User Details table.
Information management & guidance

3 Manage the user and identity lifecycle

View users’ last sign-in times

Clean up old and inactive accounts with a complete list of users’ last sign-in times. Use the `signInActivity` information available on Microsoft Graph to review the last interactive or non-interactive sign-in time for each user. Since `signInActivity` describes a property of the user object, Azure AD stores `signInActivity` for your users for as long as the user object exists.

Additional resources:
- Discover inactive users in your tenant by User type & Sign-in Activity
- Microsoft Graph overview

Manage Teams recordings

Use the Microsoft Teams admin center to limit recording sizes or automatically delete old recordings.

How to:
1. You can manage meeting expiration setting in the Teams admin center under Meetings > Meeting policies > Recording & transcription > Default expiration time

Additional resources:
- Use OneDrive and SharePoint for meeting recordings
- Set limits for Teams meeting recordings

Enable archiving mailboxes

Archive mailboxes provide EDU tenants and users with extra mailbox storage space, which is not included in the pooled storage calculation.

How to:
1. In the new EAC, go to Recipients > Mailboxes
2. In the list, select a user mailbox to enable a mailbox archive
3. Select Others > Mailbox archive > Manage Mailbox archive > toggle on Enabled

Additional resources:
- Set up an archive and deletion policy
- Learn about auto-expanding archiving
Introduction

4 Expand your storage

Options to expand your storage

If you still need additional storage after following the guidance above, consider expanding your storage with the following options.

Option 1: Upgrade your users to premium licenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Storage allocation</th>
<th>Microsoft 365 A1</th>
<th>Microsoft 365 A3</th>
<th>Microsoft 365 A5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100TB of free pooled storage per tenant across SharePoint, OneDrive, and Exchange</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>50GB is added to the tenant's central pooled storage for each paid Microsoft 365 or Office 365 A3 license</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100GB is added to the tenant's central pooled storage for each paid Microsoft 365 or Office 365 A5 license</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>User limits (Admins can set lower limits)</td>
<td>100GB (OneDrive) 50GB (Exchange)</td>
<td>1TB (OneDrive) 100GB (Exchange)</td>
<td>1TB (OneDrive) 100GB (Exchange)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Option 2: Purchase additional storage packs

To help you get exactly the storage you need, you can purchase additional storage packs for $300 USD ERP (estimated retail price) per month providing an additional 10TB of storage to the pool.

Resources:
- Add more storage to your Microsoft 365 license

Option 3: Expand beyond Microsoft 365 storage

Azure Files and Azure Blob Storage can expand your storage profile and capacity beyond Microsoft 365. For detailed guidance, check out our information lifecycle and storage management whitepaper.

Resources:
- Introduction to Azure Files
- Planning for Azure Files
- Azure Files pricing
- Azure Blob Storage
- SharePoint server in Microsoft Azure
This page summarizes the recommended best practices for information and storage management. Explore this document for detailed guidance on all these best practices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monitor storage in OneDrive, SharePoint, and Exchange</th>
<th>Monitor and manage inactive users and groups</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Track storage consumption across your tenant to identify top consumers and optimize your schools' storage resources.</td>
<td>Monitor and remove inactive users and groups that are no longer needed to optimize your Microsoft 365 tenant's storage capacity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Enable limits across OneDrive, SharePoint, and Exchange</th>
<th>Enable Teams meeting recordings retention settings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manage unexpected growth in Microsoft 365 storage by setting customizable limits on SharePoint Sites, Mailboxes, and OneDrive.</td>
<td>Automatically delete old Teams meeting recordings by setting meeting recording retention times.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<th>Enable archive mailboxes</th>
<th>Enable Exchange deletion policies</th>
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<tr>
<td>Provide users archive mailboxes for older emails which must be retained for regulatory or legal purposes and enable Archive policy to automate the process of moving older mail to the archive.</td>
<td>Automatically delete outdated or unnecessary data, such as expired contracts, old emails, or spam messages, by defining retention periods and deletion settings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For a more holistic guide to managing your data, check out our information lifecycle and storage management whitepaper.

Connect with a Microsoft certified partner for additional support. [Learn more](https://www.microsoft.com)