# COLLABORATION MEANS NEVER HAVING TO SHARE

What you need to know about collaboration in office 2016

In many ways, the success of an organization can be defined by the success of its workers working together.

A recent McKinsey study showed that where there is a strong culture of collaboration - where knowledge, information and skills are flexibly reapplied across the company - productivity increases and cost savings are considerable.

By contrast, when knowledge is held in silos, when departments jealously guard their territory and rarely share information, firms are more likely to lose out on business opportunities.
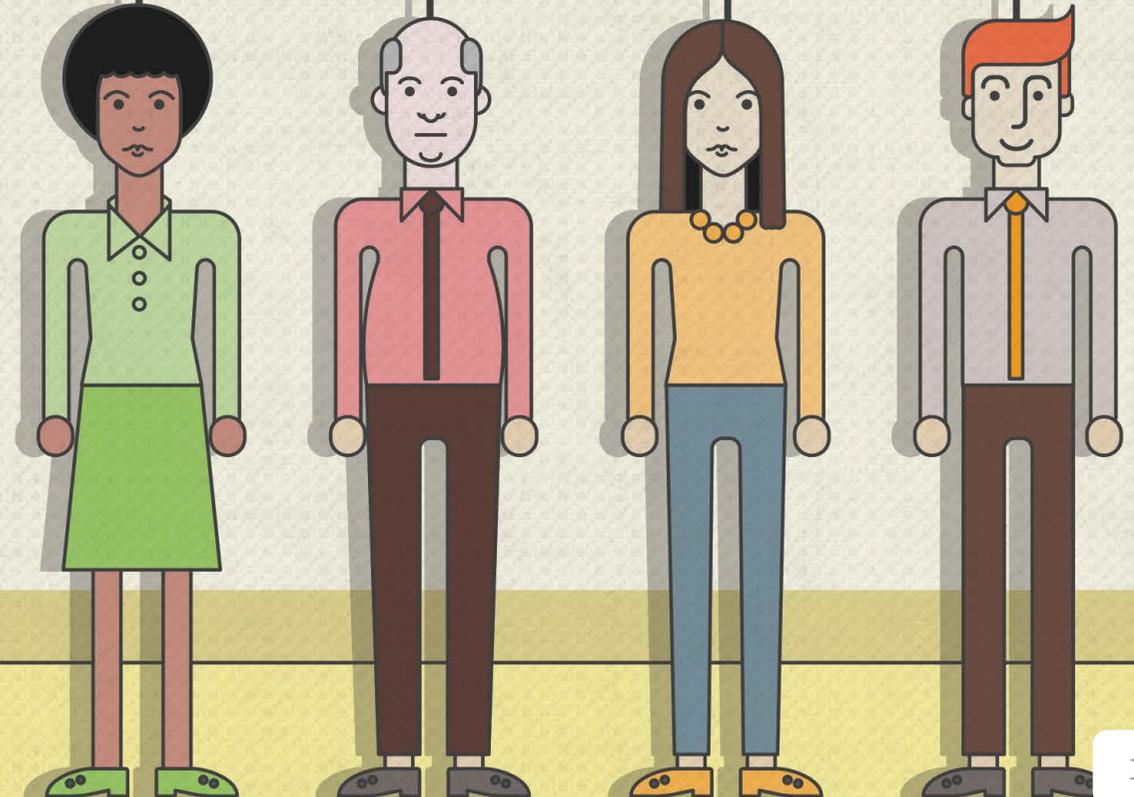
While technology cannot solve all your business problems, Microsoft's recent releases across their productivity platforms clearly highlight the importance of collaboration.

With a general release in September 2015, Office 2016 exemplifies Microsoft's new focus of enabling workers to collaborate using Word, Excel and PowerPoint, while in Office 365, Microsoft's next-gen 'portals' such as Delve and Groups promote worker collaboration in the Cloud.

Microsoft has focused on making collaboration as easy as possible. From avoiding a dependence on the back-and-forth of email or by streamlining group work, new features and improvements are a positive step towards greater collaboration.

This eBook highlights new collaboration capabilities in Office 2016 while exploring what they mean for business users.

COLLABORATION

How the new features will impact your organization's collaboration

There are two kinds of collaboration in which workers engage in the workplace; ad hoc collaboration and structured collaboration.
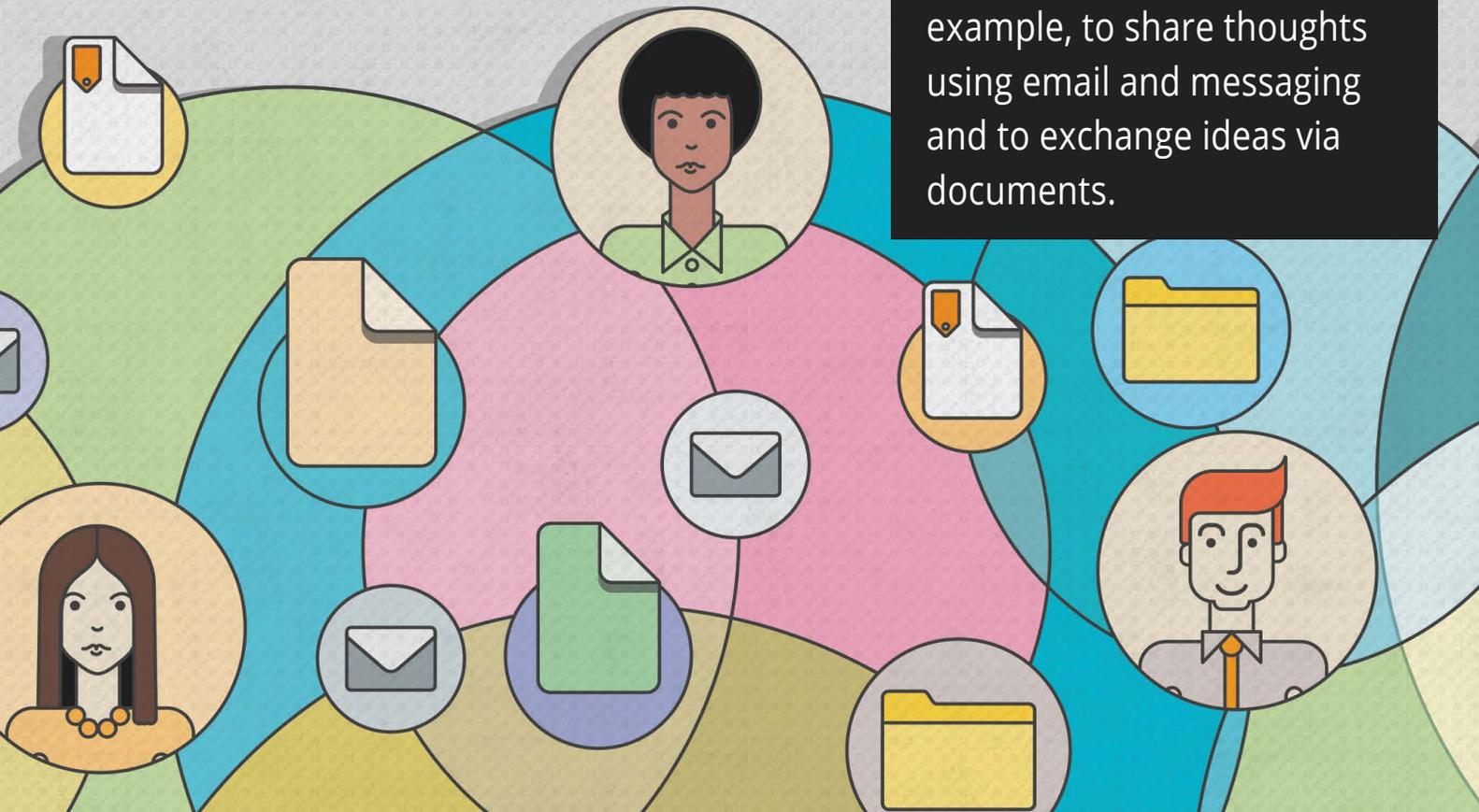
Ad hoc collaboration

occurs when colleagues band together informally to work on small, short-term, or transitory projects; for example, to share thoughts using email and messaging and to exchange ideas via documents.

Structured collaboration

plays a role in larger, more systematic projects where team members need to coordinate steps and to work in an organized manner. These projects usually employ metadata as a common language for storing, retrieving, and sharing information. Projects that manage records, clients, cases, or products often incorporate structured collaboration.

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A greater emphasis on ad hoc collaboration

With the emergence and success of major competitors like Google Docs and Dropbox, Microsoft has keenly felt the need to facilitate ad hoc collaboration across its productivity platforms. While Microsoft has long been the industry leader in the enterprise space, its cloud-based competitors offered a lighter, leaner alternative.

To Microsoft's chagrin, hundreds of millions of users flocked to these solutions, favoring their ad hoc approach to document sharing and collaboration, which makes them both accessible to the masses and simple to use.

Office 2016 and recent releases in Office 365 are the answer to this competition.

The ad hoc collaboration features introduced in Office are a major improvement and Microsoft's competitors will struggle to differentiate themselves.

What has Microsoft made available and how will it affect enterprise customers?

Office Groups

OneDrive for Business

New Office Capabilities

Improved Sync and Share

From within any of the Office 2016 apps – Word, Excel or PowerPoint - users can now share documents with colleagues from within the same document. There's no need to save the file and then upload it as an attachment to email; users simply click a 'Share' icon to place their document in OneDrive, then invite colleagues to edit it – all from a side pane.

Real time document collaboration

While it was already available in Office Online, it is now possible for colleagues to work on the same document concurrently on the desktop. As long as a document is saved in SharePoint or OneDrive, users will be able to see the presence, status and real time editing of colleagues.

Avoid document duplication

Microsoft has now made it possible to share a link to a document in SharePoint or OneDrive with colleagues via email, but without duplicating that document. This avoids situations where numerous links are sent to a document; yet as colleagues begin editing it, numerous duplicates of the file are made.

Groups make online collaboration better

Office 365 Groups provide a 'digital workspace' where colleagues working on a project can collaborate easily online. With simple set up, they provide Group Members with a mailbox and provide a space to discuss a topic together online.

Delve

Delve is not strictly a collaboration tool, yet by surfacing important information to users about documents, people, email attachments and their Groups, it will massively facilitate working with colleagues.

Of course, this list only outlines the major improvements for collaboration as announced by Microsoft – *further details about the latest releases can be found on the Office website*

How will *end user collaboration* *be* *affected?*

Microsoft's recent releases are amazingly supportive of ad hoc collaboration, yet have not filled existing gaps around structured collaboration. Let's explore how this might be the case with Mrs. Smith, a fictional project manager at an energy company.

Since the raft of new releases, Mrs. Smith finds it a lot easier to run her projects.

Every morning, she opens up Delve in Office 365. It surfaces the latest information on changes to a proposal document her team is working on in Groups. She enters the Groups email inbox and notices she received an email asking her to edit the proposal. She opens the document link to OneDrive and collaborates in real time with another colleague to make final changes.

When Mrs. Smith is content with the final version, she simply clicks the 'Share' icon in Word and sends a link to her manager – without having to open Outlook and add an attachment as with previous versions of Word.

While all these collaborative capabilities are highly useful, there have been no real improvements to critical pain points Mrs. Smith previously felt around structured collaboration.

Unless Mrs. Smith's project is small and transient in nature, she will need to create a common language (using metadata) to communicate with project colleagues.

And SharePoint metadata is the language for accurately storing, retrieving and sharing information in any sizable project.

Furthermore, she will want to coordinate activities using shared tasks, contacts, and a calendar. Yet Office 2016 offers no new capabilities to deal with these challenges.
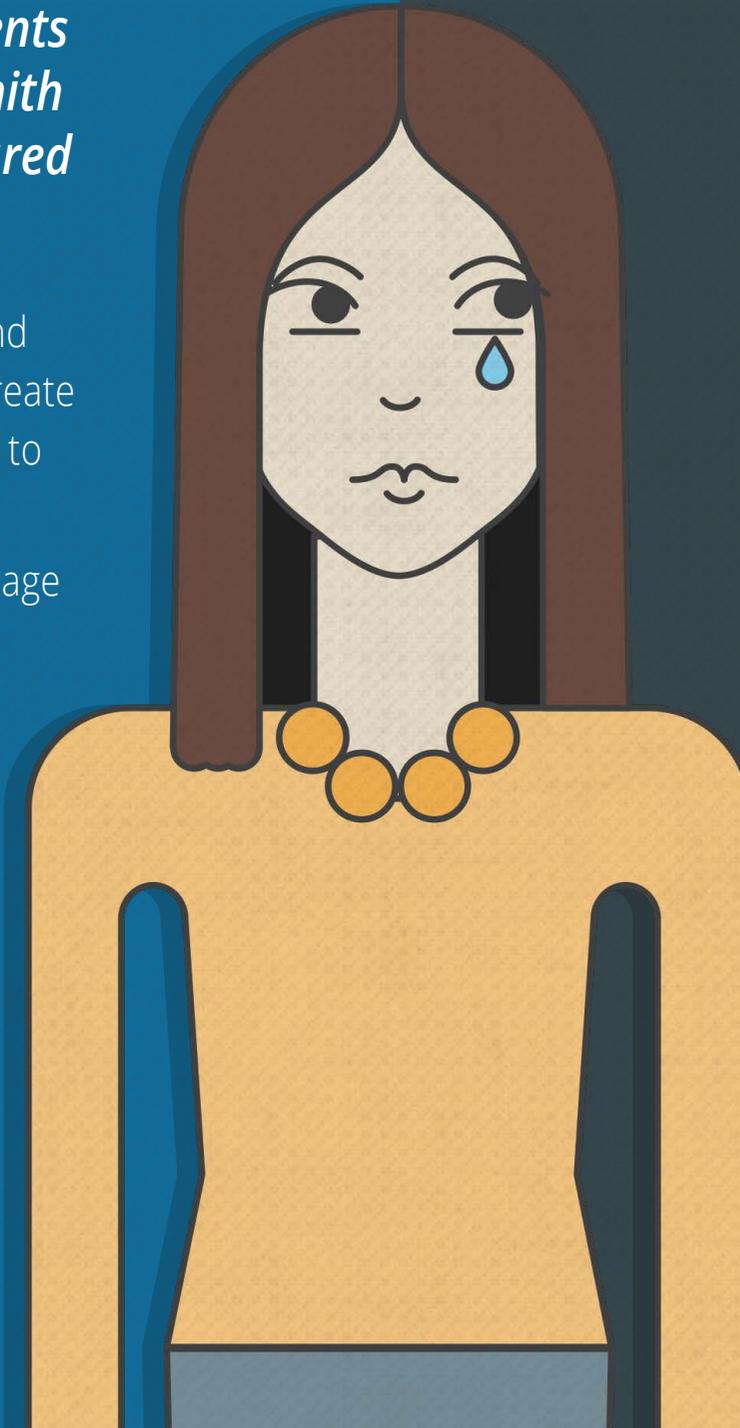
As a consequence, Mrs. Smith will still experience the pain points she felt with earlier iterations of Office:

Adding Metadata to emails and documents so they can be retrieved easily later is as cumbersome as ever.

She is still forced to switch context between apps and screens (even within the same browser) when trying to complete simple admin tasks.

Uploading emails to her company's SharePoint environment so they can be found later on is still a complex process beyond the ability of typical business users.

If the above 'heavy lifting' actions are complicated on a desktop, they're even more onerous on the road and working from a mobile device.

BRIDGING THE GAP

Office 2016 is a highly significant release for Microsoft, and in terms of ad hoc collaboration it has risen to the challenge of its cloud competitors. However, these improvements have come at the expense of long needed updates to structured collaboration across the whole Office platform.

How should organizations now plan their collaboration strategy?
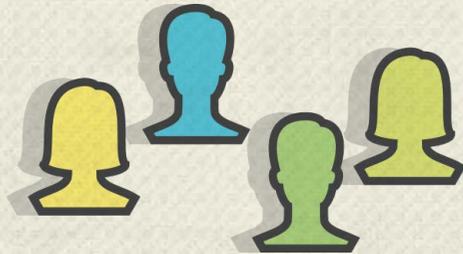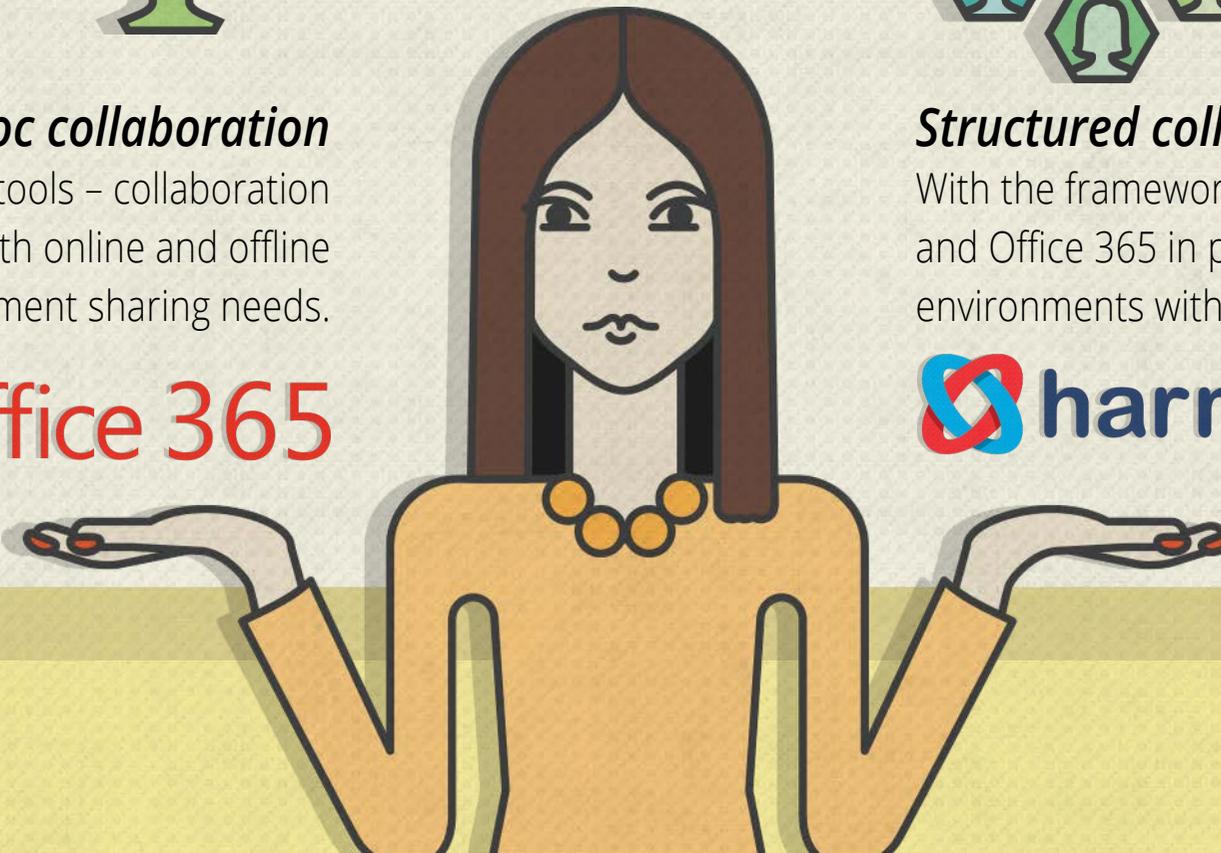
Ad hoc collaboration

Enjoy using Microsoft's new tools – collaboration has never been easier across both online and offline environments for simple document sharing needs.
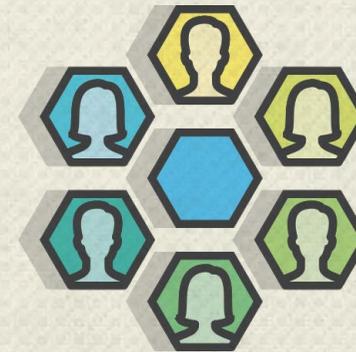
Office 365

Structured collaboration

With the framework of powerful tools like SharePoint and Office 365 in place, maximize on Microsoft's environments with products such as harmon.ie.

harmon.ie

Structured *collaboration*

harmon.ie

With the framework of powerful tools like SharePoint and Office 365 in place, maximize on Microsoft's environments with products such as harmon.ie. harmon.ie allows you to perform the 'heavy lifting' of structured collaboration from one intuitive and easy-to-use interface, and avoids confusion arising from the disjointedness of Office 365, SharePoint, OneDrive for Business, Yammer and metadata. *harmon.ie provides:*
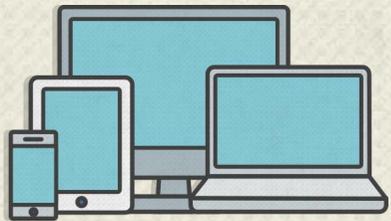
A single screen experience across desktop and mobile for structured collaboration. This reduces or even eliminates the need for context switching and makes it easier for users to adopt the Microsoft tools their company has already invested in.
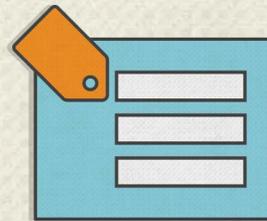
A single screen environment for adding metadata to emails and documents quickly and easily.

The ability to store and classify emails within SharePoint so they can be found later – by simply dragging and dropping into the harmon.ie sidebar.

Access to all of Microsoft's collaboration tools from mobile devices, while preserving context so as to facilitate productivity.

Mixed collaboration

Most often, colleagues want to perform both types of collaboration – editing a document in real time then adding metadata so it can be found later. Again, harmon.ie can help you achieve this goal from a single screen environment, saving time and making collaboration easier than ever before.