

Microsoft reverses decision on Office 365 migrations - blueAPACHE

Canonical: <https://www.blueapache.com/blog/microsoft-reverses-decision-automatic-office-365-migrations>

Details:

2016

Microsoft has reversed its earlier decision to automatically migrate all Australian Office 365 customer data to local datacentres. Existing Office 365 customers with core data hosted in Microsoft's Southeast Asia datacentres are now required to manually request a move of their data – and this must be done before October 31, 2016. Failure to manually request migration before this deadline will result in all data remaining in Singapore, and can not be migrated to a local datacentre in Melbourne or Sydney in future. This represents an about-turn since last September, when Microsoft announced that migration to Australian datacentres had begun, and that all business customers who selected Australia as their country would automatically be migrated within months. There was fanfare when the migrations started, and claims the local datacentres would overcome latency concerns. Steven Miller, Microsoft Australia Director of Applications and Services Group, was quoted by CRN proclaiming “The locally hosted services provide faster performance and offer geo-redundant back-up.” Despite last year's claims, Microsoft are now stating the new datacentre regions introduce no unique capabilities, features or compliance certifications and customers are assured the same quality of service, performance and security controls in the offshore datacentres. They now state that by choosing to move their data, customers may limit Microsoft's possibilities to optimise their services, and are urging customers not to take action on migrations unless data sovereignty concerns demands their core data be stored in Australia. Who is impacted? According to Microsoft, the need to manually select the migration option is only relevant to existing Office 365 customers who:

Provisioned their Office 365 tenants prior to the availability of the Office 365 datacentre region in Australia back in late March 2015.

Have data residency requirements and require their core customer data be stored in the Australian datacentres.

Have not yet had their data moved as a result of the original move program.

New Office 365 customers or existing customers whose data is already located in Australia are not impacted by this change and are not required to take any action. All impacted customers should receive direct communication from Microsoft in August 2016, via their Office 365 Message Centre. Customers who have not yet enrolled will receive a reminder message thirty days prior to the end of the enrolment period.

Requesting a data move

If you are an existing Australian Office 365 customer with data still in Singapore, you have to manually place a migration request through the Office 365 Admin Centre before 31 October 2016 . Microsoft have provided detailed instructions on how to do this. The data migration will be completed within 24 months following the end of the enrolment period. Due to the complexity, precision and scale of the migration, Microsoft is unable to provide any specific dates for moves. The move will be completed as a back-end service operation with minimal impact to end-users, and not requiring any special preparation or monitoring from customers. Customers will receive a notification in their Message Centre when it has been completed. Should you manually configure migration? This is a business by business decision. If accessing optimisation services is critical to your operations, then leaving your data in Singapore may

be the preferred option. Conversely if data sovereignty is important to you, or if you could be impacted by privacy, regulatory or compliance requirements, it may be safer to have your business data securely located within Australia. Microsoft have explained that once the October 31 deadline has passed, there is currently no way to migrate your data back. If your data remains in Singapore and there are changes to your privacy, regulatory or compliance requirements, you may find yourself in breach with little or no recourse. For more information on meeting compliance requirements or migrating your data back onshore, contact the our account team .

What decision did Microsoft reverse regarding Office 365 customer data in Australia?

Microsoft reversed its earlier decision to automatically migrate all Australian Office 365 customer data to local datacentres. Existing Office 365 customers with core data hosted in Microsoft's Southeast Asia (Singapore) datacentres are now required to manually request a move of their data instead of having it happen automatically.

What is the deadline for existing Office 365 customers to manually request a data migration to Australia?

Affected customers must manually request the migration through the Office 365 Admin Centre before October 31, 2016. Failure to do so before this deadline will result in all data remaining in Singapore, with no ability to migrate it to a local datacentre in Melbourne or Sydney in future.

What did Microsoft announce previously in September that this reversal contradicts?

In September (the prior year), Microsoft announced that migration to Australian datacentres had begun and that all business customers who selected Australia as their country would automatically be migrated within months. Steven Miller, Microsoft Australia Director of Applications and Services Group, was quoted by CRN saying 'The locally hosted services provide faster performance and offer geo-redundant back-up.'

According to Microsoft's revised statement, what benefits do the new Australian datacentre regions actually provide?

Despite last year's claims, Microsoft now states that the new datacentre regions introduce no unique capabilities, features, or compliance certifications, and that customers are assured the same quality of service, performance, and security controls in the offshore (Singapore) datacentres.

Who is impacted by this manual migration requirement?

The manual migration requirement is only relevant to existing Office 365 customers who: provisioned their Office 365 tenants prior to the availability of the Australian datacentre region in late March 2015; have data residency requirements needing their core customer data stored in Australia; and have not yet had their data moved as part of the original move program. New Office 365 customers or existing customers whose data is already in Australia are not impacted and need not take any action.

How will impacted customers be notified about this migration change?

All impacted customers should receive direct communication from Microsoft in August 2016 via their Office 365 Message Centre. Customers who have not yet enrolled will receive a reminder message thirty days prior to the end of the enrolment period.

How long will the data migration take once a customer requests it?

The data migration will be completed within 24 months following the end of the enrolment period. Due to the complexity, precision and scale of the migration, Microsoft cannot provide specific dates for moves. The move will be completed as a back-end service operation with minimal impact to end-users and no special preparation or monitoring required from customers; customers will receive a Message Centre notification when it's complete.

What factors should a business consider when deciding whether to manually request data migration to Australia?

This is a business-by-business decision. If accessing optimisation services is critical to operations, leaving data in Singapore may be preferable. Conversely, if data sovereignty is important, or if the business could be impacted by privacy, regulatory or compliance requirements, it may be safer to have data securely located within Australia — especially since once the October 31 deadline passes, there is currently no way to migrate data back.

What risk do customers face if they leave their data in Singapore and their compliance requirements later change?

Microsoft has explained that once the October 31 deadline has passed, there is currently no way to migrate data back to Australia. If data remains in Singapore and there are changes to a business's privacy, regulatory or compliance requirements, the business may find itself in breach with little or no recourse.

Who should businesses contact for help meeting compliance requirements or migrating Office 365 data back onshore?

We advise contacting our account team for more information on meeting compliance requirements or migrating data back onshore.