



Thought Leadership
Office 365 Tenant to
Tenant Mailbox Migration

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This document explains how to migrate mailboxes from one Office 365 tenant to another Office 365 tenant. If there are more than 500 users to migrate or a large amount of SharePoint data to migrate, it is a good idea to work with an Office 365 partner.

Now you can safely migrate directories, mailboxes and shared data from one Office 365 tenant to another with day one coexistence. There is no straightforward native method that would easily walk you through the migration process between Office 365 organizations.

The manual migration will be risky and time consuming process therefore, to migrate email from one Office 365 tenant to another, it is better to get a third party migration tool.

Below tools can be considered to complete the migration activities.

1. Bittitan
2. Cloud Migrator 365
3. CodeTwo Office 365 Migration
4. SysTools office 365 to office 365 Migrator
5. Clouidway

All tools will follow similar process to complete the migration. Few tools operate from cloud and other may require a tool installation.

The Need

Office 365 is being increasingly used in organizations across the globe, thanks to the intense sales focus of Microsoft and its business partners, along with a clear value proposition for organizations of all sizes. There are numerous reasons such as acquisition by a larger group, or an amalgamation of smaller organizations due to which businesses may require to migrate from one Office 365 tenant to another. These migrations come with an approach to combine resource, effort, and management; all while enhancing secure and efficient collaboration for your end users. A typical migration scenario should cover all facets of your Office 365 environment, including business email, personal and shared documents, MDM (Mobile Device Management) controls and more - to ensure a seamless cutover, with as little input or learning required for end users as possible.

What is Office 365?

Office 365 is a SaaS solution and is one of several cloud solutions offered by Microsoft. Your connectivity to, and your use of, Office 365 and other Microsoft cloud services are flexible.

- Subscribe to one service only or a suite of services (organization wide or per user)
- Subscription plans offer various levels of features
- Separate or integrate on-premises and cloud identities
- Integrate cloud services with on-premises services (Hybrid)

Office 365 offers a significant array of communication and collaboration services for organizations of all sizes. Once a organization has migrated to Office 365, it can take benefit of the frequent updates to the component services in Office 365, without the cost and complexity of managing on-premises infrastructure.

Migrating to Office 365 is a significant activity for most organizations, involving months of pre-migration learning, planning the roadmap, mitigating issues in current on-premises infrastructure, and the execution of the actual migration activities. For IT administrators who have not been involved in a prior migration to Office 365, there is a steep learning curve.

Below is the migration process usually followed for Office 365 tenant to tenant mailbox migration.

Pre-Migration Activities

1. While using the custom domain, the domain should be registered on the target office 365 domain.
2. When source and target domains are different then we need to add source domain to the target domain and complete the verification by adding TXT records to the source domain server. At this point, the process is incomplete as the domain is already attached with other server. After Migration, once we detach the source server then the process is completed.

3. In cases where source and target domains are different, suppose, if source is xyz.com and destination is abc.com then the users should be created in the destination domain before migration process starts.
4. Assign required licenses to the users.
5. Make sure that the admin account used to connect to the source Office 365 tenant has the necessary roles assigned and that it has its mailbox configured correctly and ensure that this account is mailbox-enabled.
6. Make sure the target Office 365 administrator's email address corresponds to a right domain. Assuming that your custom domain has already been added to the target Office 365 (see Step 1 above) or that you use a default target *.onmicrosoft.com domain, double-check that your target admin's email address is correct and corresponds to the domain you will be migrating to. To do that, perform the following actions:
 - Log in to the target administrator's Office 365 account.
 - Go to Office 365 admin centre.
 - Choose Users > Active users from the menu on the left. The table with all organization users will be displayed.
 - Select the administrator's account and check in the User name / Email section, if the address corresponds to the right domain.
 - If not, click Edit, locate the drop-down menu that contains all available domains within your organization, and select the domain you will be migrating to. Save the changes.
7. Prepare the source mail boxes for migration-
 - a. Impersonate the mailboxes From Exchange Admin Center
 - b. open Admin Roles and edit the Discovery Management Role,
 - c. Add Application Impersonation Role to the Roles List and add admin to the Members List

8. Prepare the Destination mailboxes
 - a. From Exchange Admin Center, Open Recipients and under mail boxes click on “...” and Set Default message box size restrictions to maximum. This can be rest to the original value after migration.
9. Install the migration tool to a computer with good configuration and better network speed.
10. Get required license for the migration tool.

Migration Process

1. Connect to the source server using the admin credentials and validate the user using the migration tool. Complete the tool initial configuration according to the tool manual.
2. Select the source mailboxes to migrate. The tools will allow you to apply multiple filters to include and exclude the mailboxes. In addition, most of the tools support to import users from CSV file.
3. Connect to the destination server and complete the required configurations.
4. Import the destination users from CSV or Add using tool options. Tools also support to create users in destination according to the source.
5. Complete the source user and destination user mapping.
6. Customize all necessary aspects of migration Job- Options may change according to the tool.
 - a. Scheduler - allows you to set the job to start automatically in the desired time frames, so you do not have to control it manually.
 - b. Time filter - is used to exclude items that are older or newer than a particular date.
 - c. Folder filter - helps you to exclude specific folders from the migration process.

- d. Advanced settings - lets you define how many mailboxes should be migrated at the same time and set the maximum size of items to be migrated.
7. Perform a test migration if tool supports it.
8. Once test migration is successfully complete, the migration process can be started.
9. Check if the number of items migrated in the target mailboxes matches the number of items in the source server mailboxes.
10. Check if there are any new items in the source mailbox after migration, if there are any new items present in the source mailbox restart the migration process with appropriate options.

Best Practices

1. Run Migration on a dedicated high configured PC if the tool requires an on premise installation.
2. Perform mx record cutover migration over weekend, next working day the new mailboxes will be ready to use.
3. If number of users is more or total mailbox size is large the migration will not complete over weekend so should consider performing a staged migration.
 - a. The migration process will start two weeks prior to the MX record cutover and will migrate all old mails first.
 - b. Once the old mails are successfully migrated to the new system we can perform an mx record cutover migration to complete the migration and then users can start using the new mail box.
 - c. Alternatively, we can perform a MX Record cutover migration first and migrate only last 90 days mails first and then old mails can be synced to the new mailbox.
 - d. More Number of migration Jobs can be created to improve the migration speed.
4. Monitor the migration process and check and find the reason for the error.

Troubleshooting

If any mailboxes fail to sync then rectify the error by checking the error log and migration report and restart the migration for the failed mailboxes.

Post Migration Activities

1. MX Record Change Over

- Change your MX records to enable mail flow to the new server. Please note that this process may take several hours.
- If any new items appear in a source mailbox while the MX records are being changed, it is possible to migrate them after the records setup process is completed. This can be done via the Rescan feature available in the Administration Panel of the program.

2. Disconnect the previous domain.

Remove the old domain from the system. If any issue occurs, the Domain Provider will support to complete the changeover.

The Migration process may take one or two weeks to complete according to the mailbox sizes and data transfer speed. For a safe migration, we can follow staged migration and after migration, we can detach the source server.

Like most IT projects, if your organization goes through the proper preparations and planning, your tenant-to-tenant Office 365 migration project will likely complete with fewer issues. If you are looking for tenant-to-tenant Office 365 migration help, please reach out to us with your project requirements.

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