



Digital Workplace with Microsoft Office

Challenges & Solutions

There are many things to consider in a Digital Workplace

In this e-book, we give you an overview of the challenges that a Digital Workplace can bring. We show you how to create a modern and future-proofed workplace with Microsoft Office and what you need to consider. A decentralized workplace is not only a challenge, but also an opportunity - become more flexible, more efficient, and discover new forms of teamwork.



Our mission

We know MS Office like the back of our hand. For years we have spent day and night together, getting to know the strengths and weaknesses. That is why we set out in 2005 to revolutionize everyday office life. We develop MS Office solutions that enable people around the world to work more easily, consistently, and efficiently with MS Office. In short: they get the best out of themselves and finally have time again for what really drives them. That is our mission.

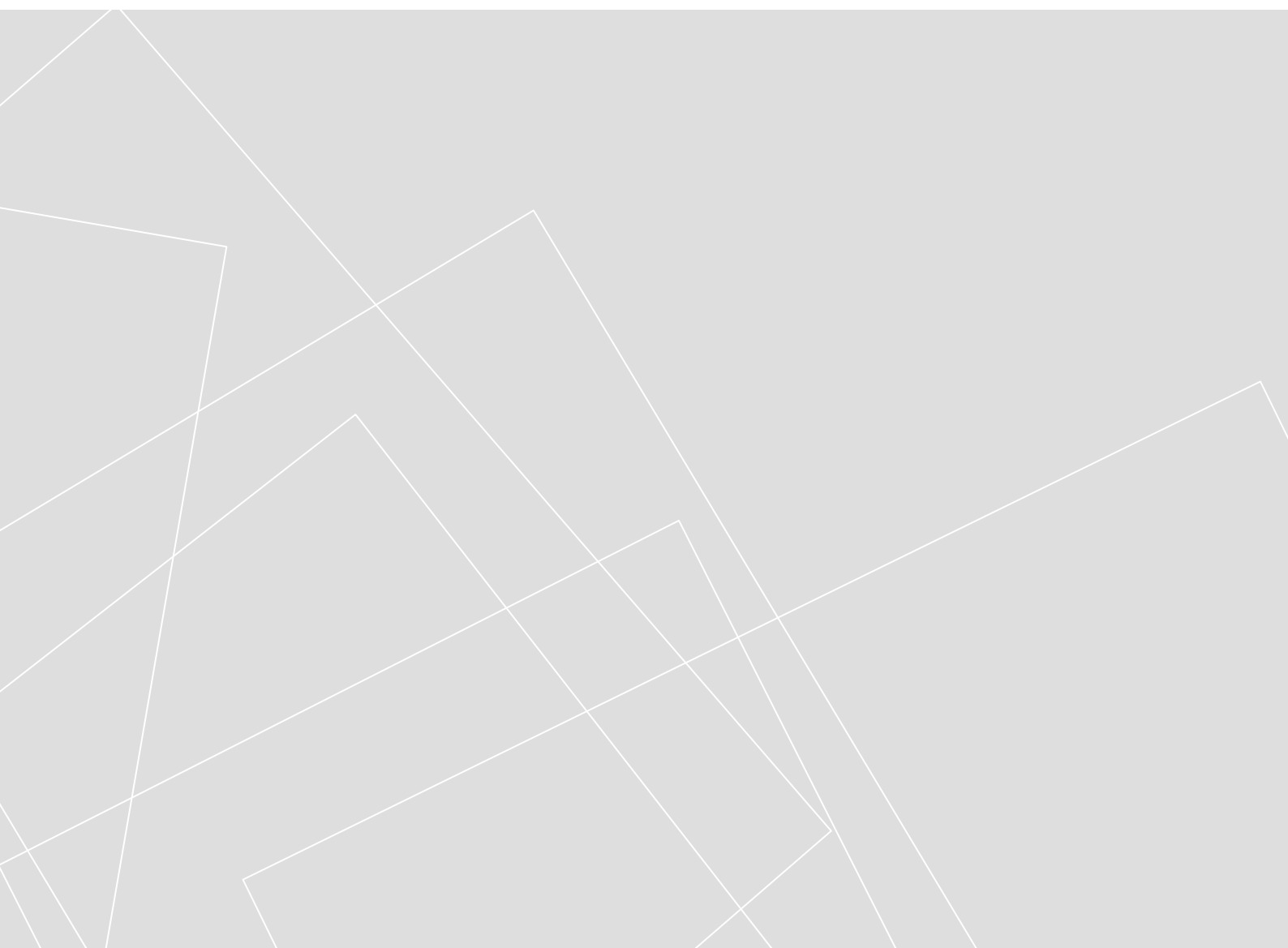


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Digital Workplace with Microsoft – what does that mean?

The Digital Workplace is strongly associated with the idea of a decentralized workplace. Until last year, whether and how to implement this concept was often an individual company decision. The COVID-19 pandemic has made it vital. Working from home has become standard and unavoidable in many companies.

Microsoft 365 offers a wide range of tools that support collaboration in the context of the Digital Workplace and raise it to a future-oriented level. In accordance with the “pareto” principle - roughly 80% of outcomes come from 20% of causes - the majority of work still has to be done after setting up a modern Digital Workplace. Processes must be optimized on many levels. Unfortunately, details are often overlooked.



What often gets forgotten when switching to a Digital Workplace with Microsoft

Microsoft 365 provides the foundation for a successful enterprise Digital Workplace, but without extra effort its potential remains untapped in terms of productivity and collaboration.

Common pitfalls: Knowledge sharing and template delivery are inefficient. Time-consuming tasks like formatting and searching for documents affect the efficiency of the entire company. User-friendliness falls by the wayside and there is a lack of connectivity to existing CMS systems.

To help you on this journey, we would like to highlight 3 issues that should be addressed: **data protection**, **performance**, and **collaboration**.

Data protection as a risk and a necessity

Data protection has increasingly become a focus of the office landscape. This development extends to the Digital Workplace and presents those responsible with new challenges. Particularly in the home office, employees must be aware of the importance of data protection to protect personal and company-internal data. These 6 aspects should be taken into account when protecting data in a decentralized workplace.



1. **Screen lock:** Employees must lock their screen when leaving their workspace so that third parties cannot view or access the device.



2. **Professional conversations:** Telephone calls and video conferences with data protection-relevant content must not be audible to third parties. In particular, employees should avoid outdoor areas such as balconies, terraces, gardens, or open windows. They should also be aware of strangers in their homes.



3. **Choice of the workplace:** There are several things to consider here. Third parties must not be able to see the workspace and the screen during working hours. The screen should not face a door or window, for example. If this is not possible, special privacy films offer an alternative. Also, the workspace must be protected outside working hours. If possible, the workroom should be locked. Alternatively, at least all paper documents should be locked in a cabinet or similar and the computer secured with a password or other authentication protection.



4. **Work devices:** Employees should be equipped with purely business-related end devices in order to avoid mixing private and business data and to increase security. Although it is possible to use private devices in the home office, employees must not be required to do so. In any case, the connection to the company network should be made via an encrypted VPN connection. End-to-end encryption is also a good idea for communication, and regular security updates must be installed on the devices.



5. **Technical environment:** With regard to security, employees must be made aware of the use of private USB sticks and WiFi networks. Private USB sticks should be avoided; a strong WiFi password is mandatory.



6. **Data backup:** Data must also be backed up regularly. You should plan and implement a data backup strategy. In on-premises data centers, this means encrypted data storage. Nowadays data backup often happens in a cloud system. Particular attention must be paid to a secure connection to the cloud, strong passwords (and possibly two-factor authentication), and the ability to delete data after someone leaves the company. Furthermore, all data and drives containing company or personal data should be encrypted to guarantee the security of the data even if the device is stolen.

When it comes to data protection, there is a lot to keep in mind. People are often not sufficiently aware of the risks involved in handling data. Awareness, education, and appropriate technical precautions are important to ensure data protection and data security.

Productivity and performance

Change always means getting used to something new. This is particularly true of the change from a traditional workplace to a Digital Workplace. As old work processes change, new processes take effect. When the work environment is decentralized, there is a risk that employee performance will deteriorate, at least temporarily. Here we show you how you can prevent this.

The infrastructure must be right

Probably the biggest problem for performance in a decentralized workplace is technical infrastructure. While the employer controls infrastructure in a traditional office building, the situation is different in a home office.

Even if adequate end devices are provided, the home Internet connection often proves to be a bottleneck. Video conferences falter, calls are interrupted, and data transfer is delayed. Unfortunately, there is no miracle cure - solutions are very individual and have to be adapted to individual cases. As a rule, wired Internet is more stable and faster than WiFi. If a direct connection to the router is not possible, a detour via the power line using DLAN can be an alternative. If WiFi is the only way to connect the end device to the Internet, a different placement of the router, a WLAN repeater or a change to a different frequency range can also help.

If employees do not have company-provided devices at their workplace, suitable accessories should at least be provided. Everyone should be equipped with webcams and audio devices to avoid problems with video telephony. This ensures smooth collaboration even via digital communication channels.

CMS systems as a challenge

CMS systems such as DAM or PIM are often not integrated with MS Office. You and your team can only use the content with cumbersome workflows. In addition, there is no synchronization of data. This poses the risk of using outdated information.

empower[®] combines your CMS systems such as DAM and PIM into one platform and makes the content available directly in Microsoft Office. Enable your colleagues to use all content without cumbersome workflows. All data is automatically synchronized and thus updated at any time.

Smooth migration with Software as a Service

In terms of performance, a Digital Workplace offers a huge advantage: The software is offered as Software as a Service (SaaS). This means that provisioning runs via the cloud and a simple web browser is all that is needed to access the programs. This saves many resources in setting up and maintaining the software and avoids a lengthy changeover process.

In the context of the home office, this also has the advantage that the local hardware requirements are very low; even older and weaker end devices can use SaaS solutions without any problems. The Microsoft 365 programs are analogous to the already familiar classics, which makes renewed familiarization obsolete.

Productivity is lost in MS Office

In our Office Study, conducted by Nielsen, we identified the biggest time wasters in Office. Around 30% of time is spent on formatting documents alone. Searching for content is another productivity enemy. You lose valuable time in MS Office, which means less time to pursue your actual tasks.

empower[®] increases productivity by 22% by counteracting the biggest time wasters in MS Office. Using Google-like search, the right content can be found in seconds. Other empower[®] productivity tools allow you to create and format documents in no time.

Smart teamwork in the Digital Workplace with Microsoft

The challenge of a digital workplace is to redesign traditional communication and work processes, whether in the home office or in the office. However, this also offers the opportunity to completely rethink processes and establish new workflows. Teamwork is at the heart of every successful company - which is why it is also at the heart of a Digital Workplace with Microsoft 365.

Teams as a hub

At the heart of Microsoft 365 is MS Teams. Here your teams can communicate with each other, exchange information and data, coordinate their appointments, and work together on documents, to name just a few of the capabilities. Furthermore, you can add guests to groups in Teams, thus integrating freelancers even more closely and meaningfully into work processes. MS Teams is the central hub of a modern workplace because access is possible from mobile devices as well as from stationary workstations.

Starting from MS Teams, the familiar Office applications form the core of a modern workplace. Documents can be processed simultaneously by the team, which makes new approaches to teamwork possible.

Data exchange unfortunately is often inefficient

Files can be stored in MS Teams or SharePoint, but this often leads to data chaos due to different versions of templates, documents, and slides in different silos. You and your colleagues waste hours searching for the right content.

With empower[®] you can provide company-wide templates at the push of a button. Content can be easily shared in a central library directly in MS Office. Everyone benefits from the entire company's knowledge. Content updates can be implemented for everyone with one click.

Maximize with empower[®]

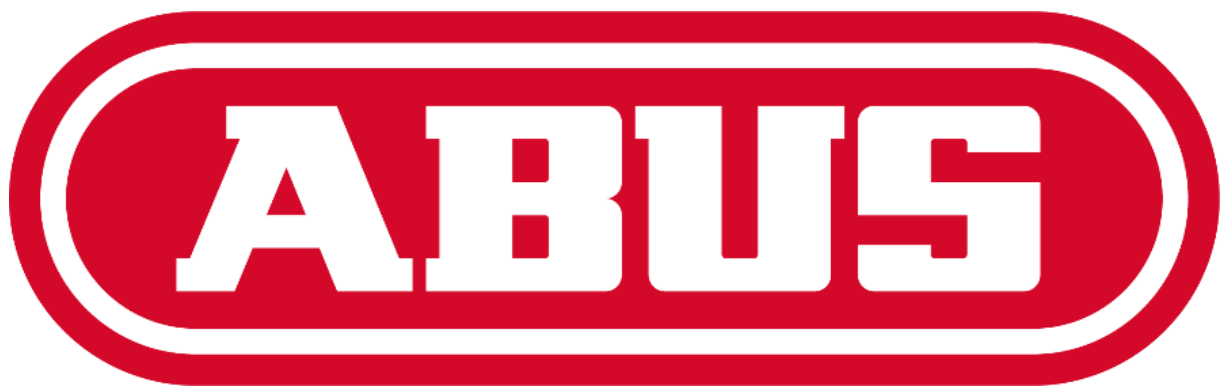
In a Digital Workplace with Microsoft 365, the empower[®] Suite helps you maximize the productivity and collaboration of your teams. Our add-ins enable quick and easy access to presentations, documents, and related resources through a central library directly in the Office applications.

This centralized management keeps everyone up-to-date, regardless of where they work. Obsolete files are a thing of the past. With the empower[®] Suite, PowerPoint presentations and the corporate library can be accessed directly in Microsoft Teams. Since the empower[®] Suite is seamlessly integrated into the Microsoft 365 applications, it can be easily integrated into existing workflows of your Microsoft Digital Workplace.

Digital Workplace success story: ABUS

"With the empower® PIM interface, we were able to almost completely avoid the enormous manual effort required to create and update the numerous product presentations."

Torsten Mühlhoff, Corporate Projects, ABUS





ABUS saves over 100 hours each year managing PowerPoint presentations through empower®.

Problem: time-intensive presentation management

ABUS implemented Informatica's PIM system to manage several hundred products (with thousands of different items). Each product relevant for a PowerPoint presentation is created in a bilingual product portfolio with 8-16 slides each. The entire spectrum amounts to thousands of slides, which have to be continuously updated or newly created.

Before empower®, it took ABUS employees a lot of time to create and update all the slides. ABUS wanted to minimize and simplify this extremely tedious work. They needed a slide or presentation library to allow easier maintenance.

In addition, it was previously very cumbersome to provide all field staff and trainers with the latest content. They were only provided with the latest product presentations by hand and on site once or twice a year, which was very time-consuming.

ABUS was looking for technologies that would significantly improve workflows and quality.

empower® as a solution

ABUS discovered that empower® is a leader in the area of PowerPoint add-ins. They liked that empower® could offer all field staff and trainers access to all current documents via the empower® library - even on iPads. There are master and slide templates in the empower® Library that all employees can use to create new presentations. This saves time and effort and ensures compliance with the corporate design.

Another plus point was empower[®]'s interface to the PIM system that makes it possible to automatically import new information from the PIM system into the empower[®] Library.

Before: without empower[®]

- Tedious manual creation and updating of product presentations
- High expenditure of time: weeks of updating product presentations (>100 hours each year)
- Elaborate distribution of product presentations to trainers and sales representatives (once or twice a year)
- Confusing workflow of presentation updates through e-mail traffic
- High susceptibility to errors: partial deviations from the corporate design in PowerPoint presentations
- Delayed provision of product information

After: with empower[®]

- New products and updates in the PIM system are automatically created or updated in the empower[®] Library as a presentation
- All presentations are available to employees regardless of location and are updated daily
- Company-wide update messages (manual additions to presentations are published company-wide)
- Presentations and slides can be updated by any employee with one click
- Brand conformity: all presentations are in the same style through master templates, slide templates, and the corporate design check
- Fewer errors occur when creating and sharing presentations across the company
- Clear, structured slide library
- Prompt provision of product information



There are a number of things to consider when moving to a modern Digital Workplace. Especially in the areas of data protection, performance, and teamwork, details can easily be overlooked.

In this article we have shown you what to look out for and how you can take advantage of opportunities that arise from the change. The empower[®] Suite can take productivity to a new level without disrupting existing work processes. Start now with empower[®].



The enterprise-class software for more efficiency

With our Add-In Suite empower® your company works smarter with Microsoft Office.



empower® will change the way your organization works with Microsoft Office and Office 365. Whether it's PowerPoint, Word, Outlook or Excel, the empower® suite makes working with Office a whole lot easier - and you get better results. The 100% compatible Microsoft Office add-in can replace many of your existing MS add-ins, simplifying update and license management.



empower® is one of the most widely used MS Office add-ins for companies.

The Office add-in empower® has already helped companies such as Continental AG and Bayer to be more efficient when creating professional Office documents.



easy

With empower® you can build professional Office documents from a company-wide Asset Library. Provide the right templates, slides, images, signatures, and more to anyone who needs them. Anytime, anywhere, with just a few clicks.



efficient

empower® boosts productivity with intelligent automation, integrated seamlessly with MS Office. Instantly searchable, ready-to-use assets make you 30 % more effective. More time for creativity, less time clicking around.



brand compliant

empower® embeds your house style in MS Office. Customizable Font and Color Pickers encourage everyone to use approved styling. Professionally built templates and powerful formatting tools produce brand compliant documents. The empower® Design Check can update any document to your corporate design.

IT specifications

Our products integrate seamlessly into your IT environment and with existing applications such as DAM, PIM and SharePoint. The unique architecture provides the highest performance for your users. And empower® can be hosted on your IT infrastructure, in your company's private cloud, or alternatively in our Microsoft Azure cloud.



You can get all information about empower® by **contacting us**.



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