



Case Study

Improved IT Infrastructure and Security Controls through Cloud-Based M365 Productivity Platform

A China based client in the biopharmaceutical sector greatly reduced their risks of security breaches and data leaks through upgrades to their IT infrastructure.

Challenges

Weak IT infrastructure and lax information security measures left our client at high risk of data leaks and security breaches.

Solutions

We implemented a cloud-based IT platform that enhanced information security control, increased reliability of IT infrastructure, and simplified IT management.

Impacts

With the new platform, our client was able to reduce data security issues. Their IT infrastructure was considerably upgraded, while maintaining cost effectiveness and not adding any significant burden on their small internal IT team.

CHALLENGE: Weak IT infrastructure and security measures, lack of control over data sharing

A China based client in the biopharmaceutical sector needed to improve their IT security and streamline internal communication channels into one centralized platform. The client already had existing IT infrastructure in place and was using the China version of Microsoft 365 (M365). Our client needed a higher level of security than the current platform provided. Considering the nature of our client's work, they placed heavy emphasis on the importance of information security, especially involving data sharing, both internally and externally, as well as preventing data leaks. Strong security control requirements were highlighted for end devices, email, etc. With a rapidly developing business amid preparing for an IPO, Dezan Shira & Associates was brought in to help quickly address these issues.

The client's existing IT infrastructure consisted of an on-premise server which was found to be unstable and prone to running improperly. The server was also at risk of single-point-failure, where if one component of their IT infrastructure failed, their entire IT system would be affected and disrupt any business

operations relying on it. Weak IT infrastructure combined with a small IT support team (one part-time IT staff and one part-time IT advisor) made finding an appropriate set of solutions that could address all of our client's concerns challenging.

In addition, with employees spread out across several countries, our client also needed a reliable and secure communication platform to enhance internal coordination and cooperation between teams and offices. At the time, employees were using third party social media tools such as WeChat and Skype for day-to-day communication, while third party conferencing platforms such as Zoom were used for team meetings. With the data being exchanged over these third-party platforms out of the company's control, a big concern for our client was security and data leaks. Employees were also already accustomed to the third-party platforms and apps – making it important that our team find a secure platform that would be easy to use to ensure efficient user adoption.

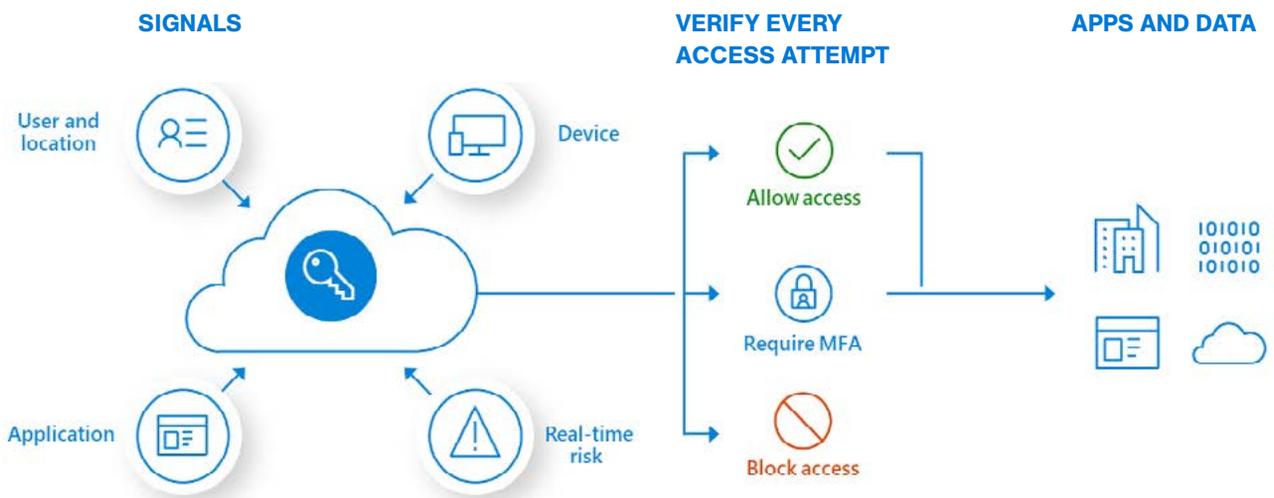
SOLUTION: Cloud based IT infrastructure with enhanced information security controls

After a thorough analysis of the client's business operations, IT infrastructure, and security requirements, our team concluded that a pure cloud-based IT infrastructure was the optimal solution. Our team recommended Microsoft 365 (M365) global version for its ability to enhance information security control, increase the reliability of IT infrastructure, and simplify IT management. Although our client was already using the China version of M365, an upgrade to the global version was recommended due to the several significant differences between the two. One of the most important being the range of vital security features available under Microsoft global version's "zero trust security" architecture.

This "zero trust security" architecture uses AI technology to monitor user activity and evaluate risks before granting access to company data and internal systems. Monitoring is done down to a very small scale such as a single document, device, or app. This was necessary for our client to ensure security of sensitive information shared frequently. Whereas traditional security control systems have one line of defense which can be easily bypassed, M365 analyzes each access attempt from any device - providing comprehensive security.

We were able to migrate all of the client's data and files over from their old system to M365 and also implement several additional features to the platform to meet their requirements and needs.

Microsoft's 'Zero Trust Security' Architecture



Additional Features/Software	Functionality	Benefits
Windows BitLocker encryption	Data Loss Prevention (DLP)	Prevents data from being leaked when devices are lost or stolen. Information marked as sensitive can only be viewed on the company's devices and cannot leave the company system (cannot be forwarded or printed).
Microsoft Azure Active Directory (AAD), Multi Factor Authentication (MFA), Conditional Access policy	Enhance Identify and Access Management (IAM)	Provides strong protection for user accounts. A smart AI-based access control screens for "high risk" log in attempts and implements further authentication requirements.
Azure Information Protection (AIP)	Continuous information protection	Extends control over data when it is shared externally. Documents shared to outside parties are protected through a pre-defined security policy only allowing approved parties to access the information within a certain timeframe.

Additional Features/Software	Functionality	Benefits
Intune	Mobile Device Management (MDM)	Manages all of the client's devices (laptops and mobiles) to ensure that they are compliant with security protocols before they can be used to access company data.
Microsoft Teams	Centralized and secure communication platform	Integrates instant messaging, audio and voice calling, as well as file sharing. All data is exchanged and transited on one reliable and trusted platform that is fully under the company's control.

IMPACT: Increased security controls and decreased risk of data leaks at a low cost

The solutions implemented by our team was able to be deployed quickly and without complex preparation work, allowing our client to address their IT issues promptly before any serious problems could occur. With the new security system and protocols, our client gained greater control over all facets of their IT security, even for very small items such as a single one-page document. This greatly increased the client's data security not only safeguarding their valuable information, but also allowing them to maintain their competitive advantages along with improving their reputation and confidence amongst stakeholders that their data is safe and secure.

Employees found the new internal communication system easy to use and quickly adapted to it. Good user experiences encouraged adoption of the new platform and allowed our client to quickly switch over all employees without difficulty.

Our solutions were cost effective for the client and did not require a large one-off investment upfront nor did they have any sizable reoccurring costs. IT management for the client was also simplified. Due to the limited resources and manpower of the client's internal IT team, several automated and smart tools were integrated into the client's IT security system to assist their team and allow them to focus on critical IT matters rather than everyday maintenance.



Adam Livermore

Partner

☎ +86 411 3957 3311 ext. 8060

✉ adam.livermore@dezshira.com



Thomas Zhang

Partner & Head of IT

☎ +86 755 8366 4120 ext. 3060

✉ thomas.zhang@dezshira.com

CONTACT US

Our offices

Beijing
Qingdao

Dalian
Shanghai

Dongguan
Shenzhen

Guangzhou
Suzhou

Hangzhou
Tianjin

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