

The Modern Microsoft 365 Experience

How moving to Office web apps with Island lowers costs and reduces risk while keeping the experience familiar.

Modernize and Protect Microsoft 365 with Island

Lower costs. Reduce risk. Familiar experience. Safe access on any device.

Who this is for

Small and midsize business owners and leaders, department managers, and IT teams who want a simpler, safer way to run Microsoft 365 without installing full desktop apps on every computer.

What you'll learn

- How Office web apps feel like installed apps when delivered in Island's dedicated app windows
- When the web apps cover day-to-day work, and when desktop apps still make sense
- How this approach can reduce costs, improve data protection, and enable safe access on any device

Quick summary

- Looks locally installed, runs in the cloud. Island opens Outlook, Teams, Word, Excel, and PowerPoint in clean application windows, outside the browser.
- Lower cost, lower risk. Many roles can use web-only plans; Island helps keep sensitive data in your company cloud and applies consistent access rules.
- Easy to try. No license changes required to test. Your MSP, IT provider, or trusted technology advisor can set up a quick proof-of-value.

1. Why now

More organizations are standardizing on cloud access and lighter, easier-to-manage devices. Microsoft has invested heavily in the web versions of Office apps, narrowing gaps with desktop for everyday work. You can test it quickly and see for yourself how it works before deciding.

2. What improves when you use Office web apps through Island

- Lower costs. If many staff don't need desktop apps, you may choose lower-cost plans while keeping a subset on desktop where needed. Pricing differences between Business Basic, Standard, and Premium can be significant.
- Reduce risk. Island helps control how people sign in and how files are handled, ensuring downloads are only allowed on trusted, company-approved devices and keeping sensitive data in company systems.
- Safe access on any device. Contractors and employees can work from personal or off-network machines without adding risk, because access happens through Island's governed path.
- Familiar experience. App windows open like installed software, so adoption is easier. Island supports installable app windows that can be pinned to the Start menu or taskbar, giving users the same quick-launch convenience as traditional desktop apps.
- Simpler operations. Fewer installs to manage, fewer version mismatches, and collaboration centered on OneDrive and SharePoint.

3. “Do the web apps really match desktop?” (Objective view)

For day-to-day work in Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, the web apps handle the core tasks most teams need—editing, formatting, commenting, reviewing, co-authoring, tables, charts, and more. Microsoft maintains comparison pages that show the overlap and the exceptions.

- Excel macros/VBA and some advanced data features still require desktop Excel.
- Certain advanced layout or protection features differ in the browser.

The takeaway: for most people, web apps cover daily work well while certain power users can keep desktop apps.

4. Outlook and Teams: what to expect

Outlook on the web can be installed in Island as its own app window and pinned to the taskbar—so it opens just like desktop Outlook. It looks, feels, and works like a native app, but everything runs from the web interface within Island. That means Island’s access controls and data policies are in place, while your team uses an interface that just feels familiar.

Whether in the browser or in an app window, Teams works well for everyday chat and meetings. A small number of advanced features remain desktop-only. If specific features are required, keep desktop Teams while moving the Office apps to Island web apps.

5. Performance, simply stated

Most users experience faster, smoother performance with Office web apps in Island’s app windows on modern devices. Since the full locally installed Office applications are no longer required, system resources are freed up. This allows organizations to extend the life of existing hardware and reduce the need for expensive high-spec computers.

6. Keep company data in the company cloud

When files live in OneDrive and SharePoint, authorized users can access them securely from anywhere, with version history and easier sharing built in. This reduces the risk of uncontrolled copies on individual devices and improves productivity without sacrificing security. Island adds another layer of protection by guiding access and only allowing downloads to trusted devices.

7. When desktop apps may still make sense

- Excel with VBA/macros or specialized add-ins
- Very large or highly complex workbooks or presentations where the browser has practical limits
- Specific Teams meeting, presenter, or calling scenarios that are desktop-only

Use desktop selectively for these roles and keep everyone else on Office web apps in Island.

8. Can we really save money? (Illustrative scenarios)

Pricing changes over time; always confirm current Microsoft pricing. Mixing plans is supported.

Example A: Business Premium to Business Basic

A 100-user company running **Microsoft 365 Business Premium** at \$22 per user per month.

If 85 of those users only need web and mobile apps, they can move to **Business Basic** at \$6 per user per month.

15 users remain on Premium: $15 \times \$22 = \mathbf{\$330/month}$

85 users move to Basic: $85 \times \$6 = \mathbf{\$510/month}$

New monthly total: \$840

Previous monthly total: \$2,200

Monthly savings: \$1,360 (over \$16,000 annually)

Example B: Enterprise E3 to Frontline F3

A 100-user company running **Microsoft 365 E3** at \$20.75 per user per month.

If 85 of those users only need web and mobile apps, they can move to **Microsoft 365 F3** at \$8 per user per month.

15 users remain on E3: $15 \times \$20.75 = \mathbf{\$311.25/month}$

85 users move to F3: $85 \times \$8 = \mathbf{\$680/month}$

New monthly total: \$991.25

Previous monthly total: \$2,075

Monthly savings: \$1,083.75 (about \$13,000 annually)

Note: In many markets, Microsoft sells Microsoft 365 plans with or without Teams, and Teams can also be licensed separately. If your business still requires the desktop Teams app, that does not prevent you from moving Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook to Island's web-app approach. Confirm the best option with your MSP, IT provider, or trusted technology advisor.

9. BYOD done right

With Island, you can allow access from personal or third-party devices while keeping sensitive data in your company environment. People get familiar app windows; you get consistent sign-in and data-handling rules. This works on Windows, macOS, and IslandOS.

10. Try it first: a quick proof-of-value (no license changes needed)

What you'll do (guided by your MSP, IT provider, or trusted technology advisor):

- Install Island for a small pilot group.
- Create Island-based app windows for Outlook, Teams, Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. Pin them to the taskbar or Start Menu.
- Open and save files. If your files already live in OneDrive or SharePoint, just work as usual. If not, test with sample files or temporarily open and save local copies. Plan a migration when ready.
- Validate the experience: sign-in, notifications, file open and save, collaboration, printing, and any specific workflows.
- Optional: include one unmanaged device to see how access and data handling behave.

Success looks like:

- People describe the experience as “like the desktop app”
- No sensitive files land on personal devices
- Outlook and Teams feel smooth for day-to-day use
- Your team confirms the feature set is sufficient—or identifies a few roles that should keep desktop apps

Common questions

Can we keep desktop Teams if we need a specific feature?

Yes. Keep desktop Teams for those users and still move the Office apps to Island's web app experience. Licensing for Teams is offered separately in many markets; check your tenant and region.

What about Outlook—should we use the new Outlook for Windows or the web app in Island?

We recommend Outlook on the web in an Island app window to keep Island's protections in place. The new Outlook for Windows is built on the web experience, but because it does not run through Island, it misses those protections and still requires Microsoft's desktop licensing. That means you lose both the security benefits of Island and the potential license savings.

Will we lose any important functionality in Word, Excel, or PowerPoint?

Most daily work is covered. If you rely on Excel VBA or very advanced features, keep desktop Excel for those roles. Microsoft's comparison pages detail the differences.

What about performance?

Island's app windows for Office web apps feel responsive on modern devices, since they avoid the heavy resource demands of locally installed desktop applications. This means businesses often don't need high-end hardware to deliver a smooth user experience.

How is our data protected?

When files live in OneDrive and SharePoint, you gain version history, simpler sharing, and fewer uncontrolled copies on endpoints. This aligns with recommended practice for small and midsize businesses. Island applies consistent access and data-handling rules so sensitive files don't spread onto unmanaged machines, and your MSP, IT provider, or trusted technology advisor can set the right policies in both Microsoft 365 and Island to ensure security and compliance.

Do we need to move all our files to the cloud to try this?

No. If your files already live in OneDrive or SharePoint, start immediately. If not, test with sample files or open/save local copies, then plan a migration with your MSP, IT provider, or trusted technology advisor when ready.

Can we back up our Microsoft 365 data?

Ask your MSP, IT provider, or trusted technology advisor about third-party backup for Microsoft 365 (OneDrive, SharePoint, Exchange).

Will this approach support our compliance requirements?

Island helps businesses align with a wide range of compliance frameworks by giving you more visibility and control over how users access and handle data. For example, Island can record access and policy events to strengthen internal controls, provide logs to support audits, and enforce consistent rules for handling sensitive information. Beyond logging, Island's ability to guide access, limit data movement, and enforce policies helps organizations meet requirements in areas like data protection, privacy, and financial record-keeping. While every compliance framework has its own details, Island reduces the gaps that often create compliance risk and makes it easier for your MSP, IT provider, or trusted technology advisor to help you demonstrate readiness.

Desktop Experience

With Island, Office apps don't feel like web apps in a browser. They open in their own dedicated application windows, providing a familiar desktop experience. They can even be pinned to the Start menu or taskbar to launch just like the desktop versions.

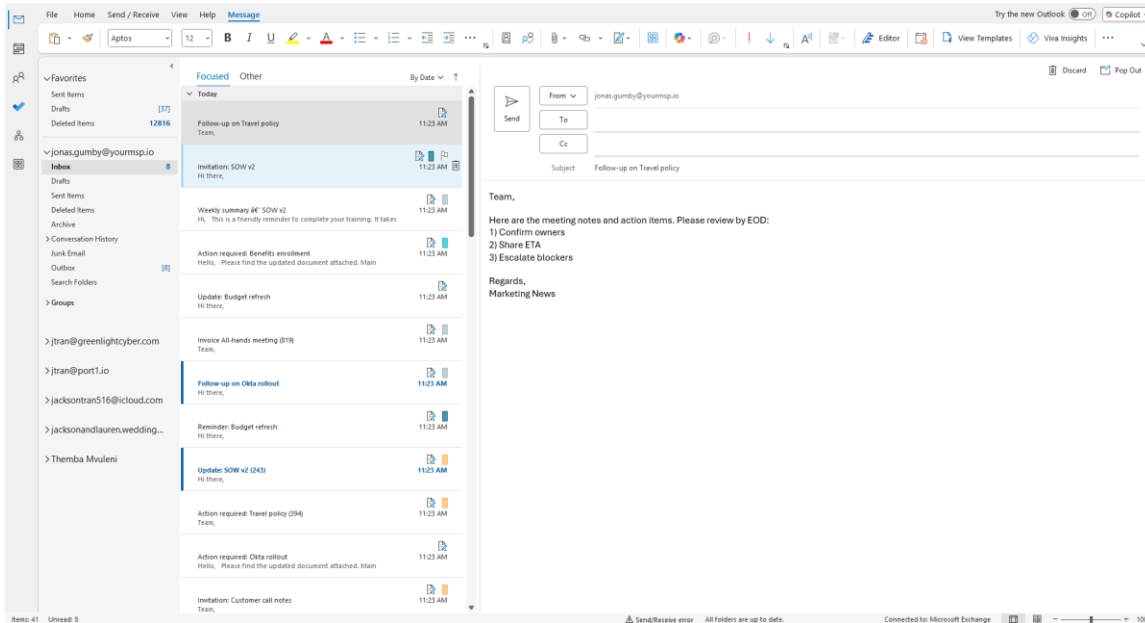


Figure 2 New Outlook on Windows (locally installed)

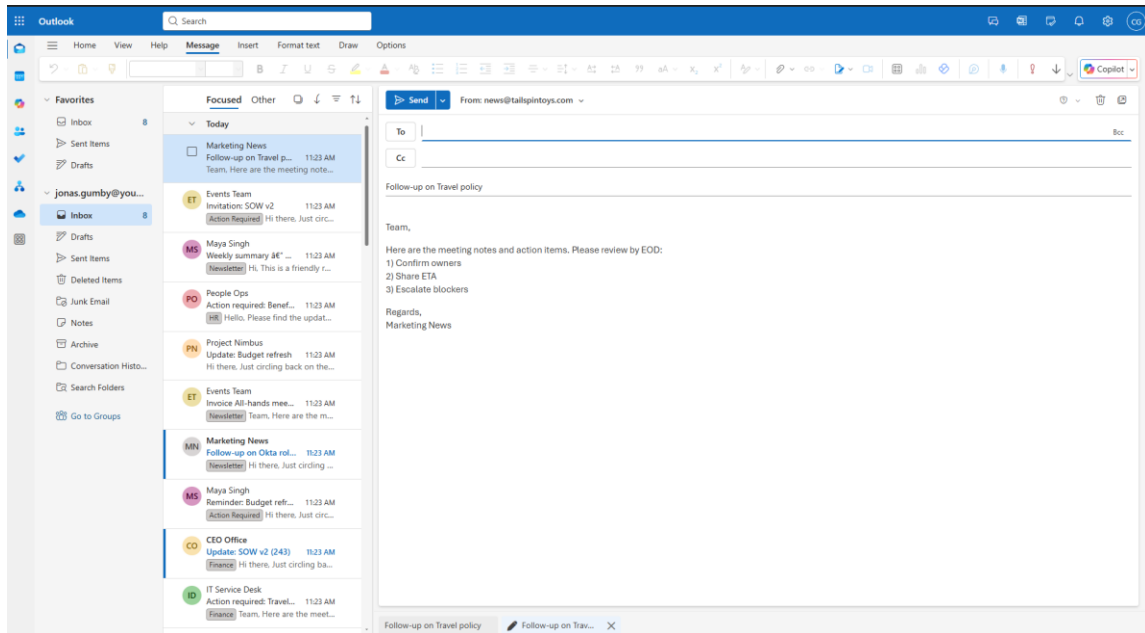


Figure 1 Outlook Web via Island Progressive Web App.

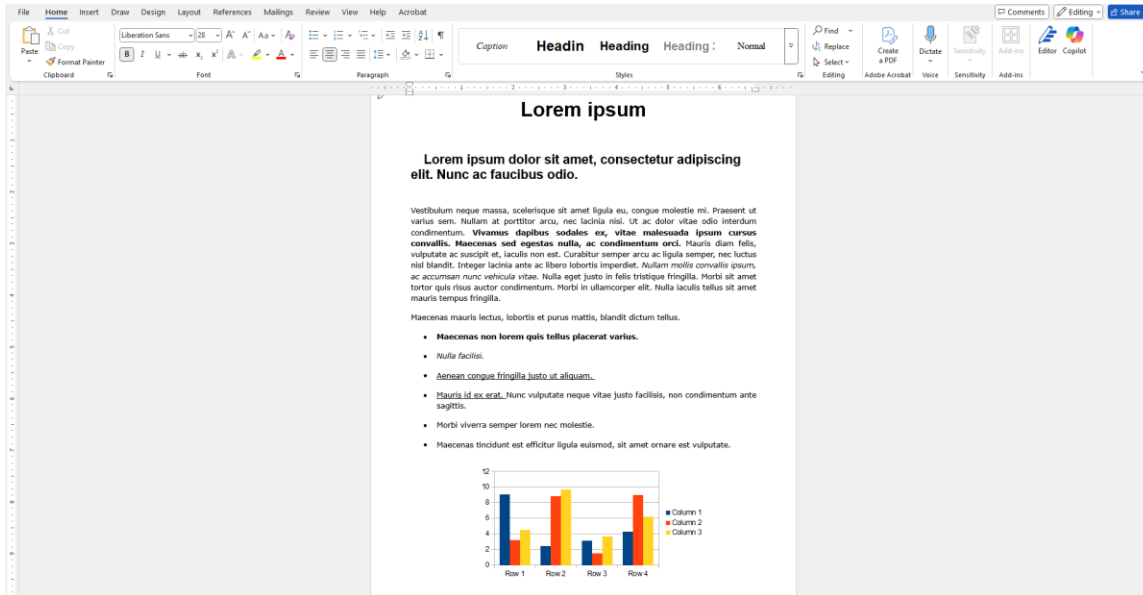


Figure 4 Word on Windows (locally installed)

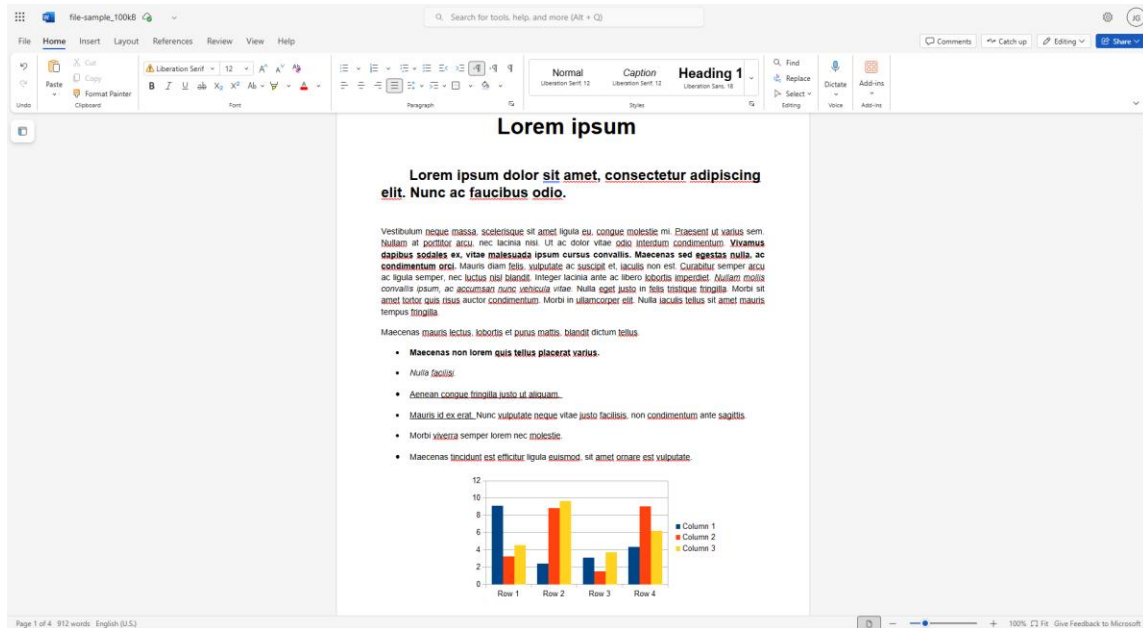


Figure 3 Word Online via Island Progressive Web App.

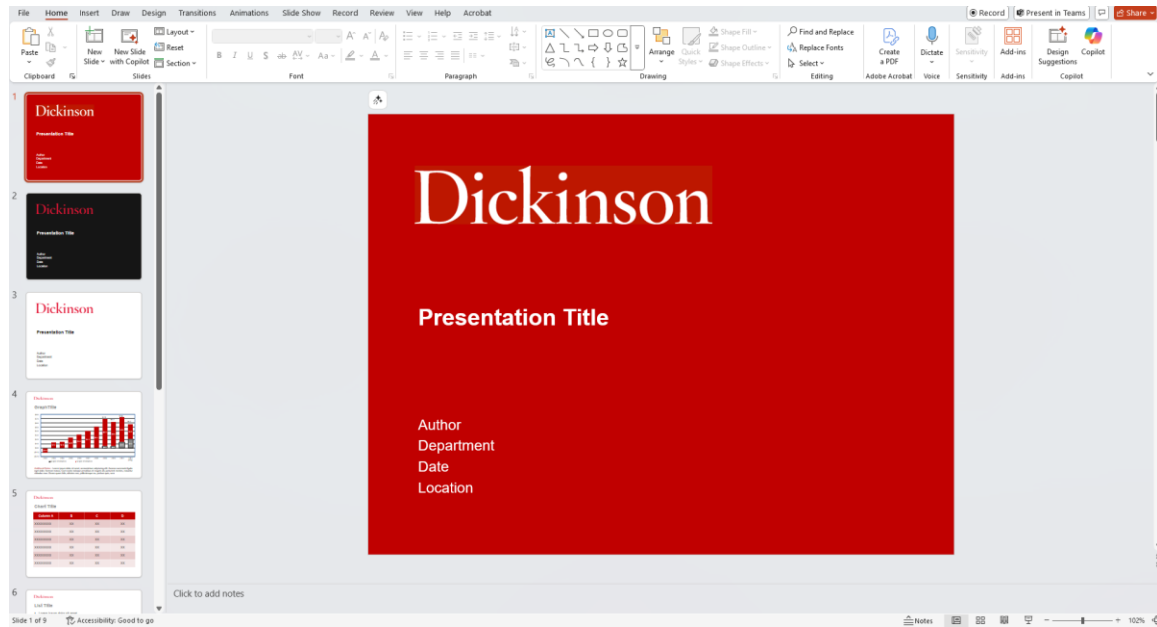


Figure 8 PowerPoint on Windows (locally installed)

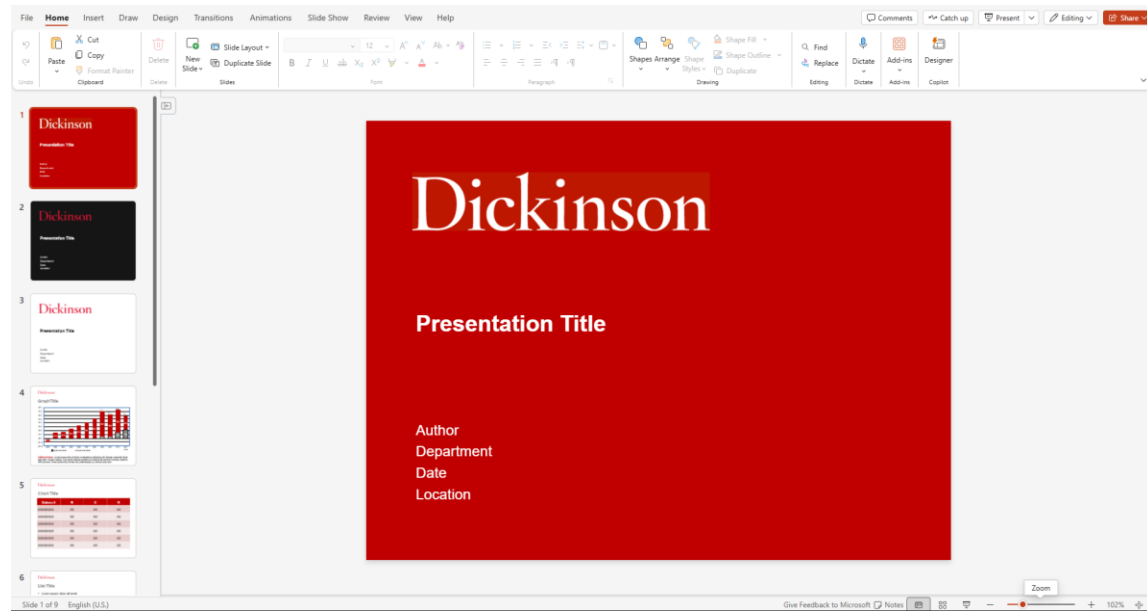


Figure 7 PowerPoint Online via Island Progressive Web App.