

## What Makes Microsoft Teams and Microsoft Groups Different?

Differentiating where Microsoft Teams ends and where Microsoft Groups begin can be a daunting process. While ultimately compliments of one another, there are notable differences between the two applications that you must be aware of for effective usage. As stated, the two services must be seen as collaborators rather than Teams being the successor to Groups. Groups enables functionality and Teams achieves it. (What Makes Microsoft Teams and Microsoft Groups Different?, 2017)

**Microsoft Teams**, is built around the idea of ad-hoc teams, combined with the power of Skype. Teams, integrates with Groups and is useful for Small Projects, Departments that need fast collaboration conversations via Skype. Teams has a great user interface, very easy to use and is the same whether in the web or using the mobile app.

The downside of using Teams, is really around confusion of when to use them, tracking and reporting data. Even though the core data is saved back into a SharePoint site, it can very quickly become very complicated to hop around and do what you need like you would using a SharePoint team site. The last problem is that to get the full Team experience, you really need to use the Teams applications either on your mobile device or desktop. Though you may be used to using apps this way, having a dependency on features this way though good for Microsoft could be a hindrance for user adoption. (Cleary, 2017)

- Teams is aimed at internal collaboration and currently offers no external sharing option, while Groups allows for outside members incorporation.
- Emphasis on security is greater in Teams, which always requires multi-factor authentication for entry. Because of this privacy, different Teams cannot be searched for, posing the problem of duplicates being created.
- Inversely, Groups can be found by simply browsing Office 365
- On the other end, chat, Wiki, Channels, business to Skype integration, and selective enablement and disablement of services/workloads are accessible solely to Teams.
- The most notable difference between the two is the chat feature in Teams. This orients Teams as the communicative side of the pairing, and the best option for continual commutations between members.
- A Teams App is available in the Apple, Google, and Microsoft stores.

**Groups**, is the first attempt by Microsoft to create a true collaboration tool that spans multiple services and components within Office 365. An Office 365 group consists of email, calendar and storage for documents and files.

The main advantages of using Groups, is around the shared calendar and email which integrates into both the online mail and Outlook clients no matter whether on a mobile device or desktop, using Windows or MAC. A group is a great place to use multiple applications such as Planner, OneNote and things like Power BI, making them visible in a central place. The real win here is that they are easy to manage and create, which happens to also be a downside of using them as they will quickly multiply within your tenant. As with Teams, Groups does not provide the same level of document management that SharePoint team sites, do albeit they are using SharePoint for storage. To perform anything of use within the SharePoint site you need to navigate out of the context of the Group. This can cause confusion and often end up breaking functionality if major changes are made. The site collection behind a Group and a Team has certain features removed also which adds to the problem. (Cleary, 2017)

- Groups give you your Outlook email, shared Outlook calendar, SharePoint site collection, OneNote notebook, and power BI workspace, and Teams allows you to utilize them efficiently.
- Landing pages, the News feature, and Yammer groups are only available to Groups.
- A Groups App is available in the Apple, Google, and Microsoft stores.

*In a nutshell, Groups is how you share your resources. Teams is how you talk about what's being shared.*

## Group and Team use Scenarios (Strant, 2017)

### *Use Case 1: Have an existing Group and want to create a new Team*

If a group of users is already using Office 365 Groups, then they already have:

- Exchange mailbox and calendar
- File storage (powered by SharePoint)
- OneNote notebook
- Planner (just one)

Let's say Bob wants to create a Microsoft Team. Bob can simply make one and connect it to an existing Office 365 Group.

However, the integration between the new Team and the existing Group has some gotchas:

- Teams do not show existing file storage from the Group unless you add a SharePoint tab, which is confusing and adds extra tabs as you already have one for Files.
- Teams do not display the existing Groups' OneNote content, only the sections that were created for each channel
- The existing Planner already in the Group is not accessible at all from the Teams interface
- New Planner tasks created in separate channels within the Team do not show up in Groups or Planner (Strant, 2017)

### *Use Case 2: Create a Team without connecting it to an existing Group*

What happens if someone creates a new Team but doesn't connect it to an existing Group? This can quite easily happen as Teams are invite-only, you can't browse what other Teams might already exist. For example, Bob is a member of the "Sales" Group, but Sally isn't a member of that Group. Not knowing that the Group exists, Sally goes out and creates a "Sales" Team, each new Team also gets an Office 365 Group.

This means Sally has inadvertently created a new "Sales" Group that serves a similar purpose, and likely has a similar name to the "Sales" Group Bob was already in. That's a problem as we now have potential duplication and naming confusion. The only way around this is to delete Sally's Microsoft Team and subsequent Office 365 Group, and instead create a new Team that is purposely connected to the existing Group Bob is a part of.

Let's take this scenario a step further...

Imagine if Sally's new Team/Group wasn't detected straightaway and carried on with adding content, conversations, and Team members! It would be confusing for the users because of the duplicate workflow, and then someone eventually has to clean up the mess to move the file content from this Team to the other Team. But then we run into an issue because there is no way at this point to migrate Team chats!

Even if we get through all that and make it work properly – there's been a lot of confusion already separate the fact that Teams present a different interface for working. (Strant, 2017)

### *Use Case 3: Create a Team and only a Team*

This is considerably simpler for Bob or Sally to do than the previous scenarios as everything is new and clean, so you don't have to worry about duplicating existing content.

When Microsoft released Teams, they pushed it as a fundamental shift from how organisations and groups (err... teams?) of users work. It's the chat-based, fast-paced alternative to Exchange emails. It's highly likely that those who simply want a Team and only a team are the type of users that don't care for emails.

This leads me to confess that I've created yet another misleading title. As we've already covered, when you create a Microsoft Team you will also **always** get an Office 365 Group unless it is deactivated.

Wait... what? I'm trying to get away from group email, that's why we're using Teams in the first place! The shared Team OneNote, Planner, calendar, and file storage make sense, but what are we supposed to do with this mailbox? We use Teams to communicate for everything! (Strant, 2017)

### *Best Case Scenario*

The reality is that creating a new Team is the best and easiest way to go, but that's not really possible if you've already invested time in building out your Office 365 Groups. If, however, the amount of investment in your Office 365 Group content isn't that great, you can shuffle some things around to make that work.

In my personal experience, I had three existing Groups with OneNote content, files, and emails. In only one of those three instances was there any Planner content. All I simply had to do for all the other content was:

- Move the files to the appropriate channel folder created
- Move the OneNote pages to the appropriate section created
- Figure out what to do with the Planner tasks and buckets

Luckily there weren't that many, so we manually re-created them.

But, that's not necessarily practical in a larger organization or with users who are less in the know. (Strant, 2017)

## Staying in Control

It is important when considering the deployment of Office 365 Groups vs Teams that we give it some thought before “going viral.” While these technologies make it easy for end users to simply press a button and get going, we need to keep this behavior in check without stifling it.

Ensure these key areas are covered:

- Governance
- Security
- User education
- Data management (duplication and versioning)
- Lifecycle

Instead of pitting Office 365 Groups vs Teams, the two together provide a very powerful disruptor in the way we work on a daily basis. However, we need think them through to ensure that the disruption leads to a positive outcome and improved user experience, not confusion and frustration.

Below is a one-sheet of things to consider when rolling out Teams. (Strant, 2017)

## 4 Considerations Before Rolling out Microsoft Teams

Have Office 365 Groups and want to add Microsoft Teams to the mix? Here are some important interactions between the two that you need to remember.

### 1 Provisioning



Creating a Team will always automatically create a Group—along with all of the additional resources that come with a Group.



If you want to create a new Team and connect it to an existing Group, you can only connect to the Group if you are the Group owner.



If you want to merge two Teams, you can only move files and calendar items. There is currently no way to move conversations, chats, or tasks.

### 2 Notes



A Team will not display the existing Group's OneNote content – only the sections that were created for each channel.

### 3 Tasks



The Group Planner is not accessible at all from the Teams interface, and Team Planner tasks created in separate channels will not show up in the Group Planner.

### 4 Files



A Team's file storage will not sync to existing file storage from a connected Group.



The only way to see your Group files in the Teams interface is if you add the Group file storage URL as a SharePoint tab.



If you delete content in a Team channel or file, it is not recoverable, unless it was under a SharePoint tab.

Reference websites

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