

Public Record Office Victoria Report

**2019 Survey: Office 365 and SharePoint Online:
Summary Report V1.0**

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1 Executive summary

Office 365 and SharePoint Online Statistical Survey Results

Public Record Office Victoria (PROV) issues Standards for the management of public records. Victorian government agencies are required to implement a program of records management in accordance with those Standards. PROV also publishes advice on a range of topics that agencies may encounter in applying the Standards. This includes advice that relates to common services and technologies used by agencies, such as Office 365 and SharePoint Online (O365/SPO).

PROV circulated a short ten question survey to agencies in May 2019. The purpose of the survey was to inform PROV's direction regarding advice on managing records in an O365/SPO environment. Thirty-four responses were received spanning nine government sectors, including four submitted anonymously. This report sets out the results of the survey.

O365/SPO is likely to be implemented across most of Victorian government. It is increasingly being used to create, capture, and in some cases manage, a significant proportion of Victorian public records. This is due to a variety of factors, including user expectations and a push for interoperability across government.¹ However, the survey results flag considerable gaps in agency knowledge of and capability for compliant management of records; especially after implementation.

Recommendations to Victorian government agencies for the effective management of O365/SPO records are located in section 4 of this report.

¹ For example, the OneVPS Strategy includes a common technologies and practices component to enable VPS members to move easily across government (<https://engage.vic.gov.au/onevps>).

2 Method

How the survey was conducted

2.1 Purpose

The survey on O365/SPO forms part of a larger program of work being undertaken by PROV on O365/SPO. The key objective of this work is to improve the ability for Victorian government agencies to manage records in accordance with the *Public Records Act 1973* in an O365/SPO environment.

The purpose of the survey was to:

- better understand how agencies are using O365/SPO and how PROV recordkeeping tools and guidance may assist agencies in their use
- identify approaches to implementation of Office 365 products, including configurations and third party integrations, that agencies found improved their management of public records.

Results of the survey are contributing to the development of recordkeeping advice on the management of public records in O365/SPO environments, such as the [Office 365 Topic Page](#) on PROV's website.

2.2 Data collection

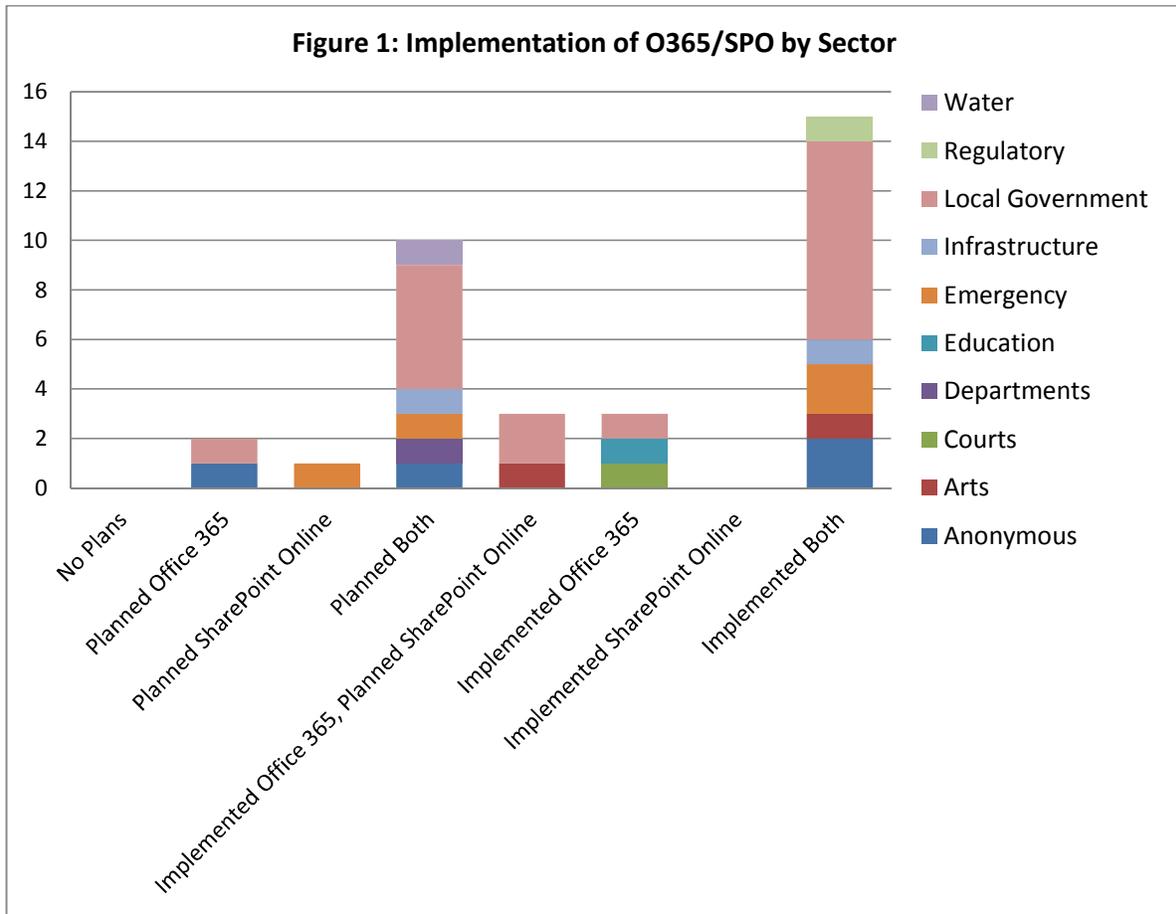
Research conducted by PROV on records management topics generally include stakeholder consultation activities, such as a survey or round-table discussion forums. A request for feedback on O365/SPO was circulated via our government recordkeeping newsletter, *PROV Bytes*. The request invited agency staff to contact PROV directly about the approach they have taken and any recordkeeping challenges they have experienced. In-person or telephone interviews with those who contacted PROV expressing interest were conducted. Those interactions were used to refine an initial set of survey questions.

The above process resulted in a short ten question survey that could be more widely distributed across agencies (a copy of the survey questions is located in appendix one). The survey was circulated to stakeholders via *PROV Bytes*, the PROV Blog, stakeholder forums, social media and targeted contacts throughout May 2019. As some agencies were unable to access the chosen online survey platform (SurveyMonkey) a Word version of the survey was circulated along with the survey link.

2.3 Who responded

After removal of duplicates and combining multiple responses from the same agency, a total of 34 responses were received that spanned nine sectors of Victorian government. Four responses were submitted anonymously. Figure 1 (below) shows the current or planned implementation of O365/SPO by sector.² Of the 34 respondents, 21 had already implemented O365/SPO and 13 planned to do so.

² Please note that although the survey responses revealed no one has implemented SharePoint Online without Office 365, additional discussion revealed at least one agency planning to do so.



2.4 Main themes

The following key themes emerged from the survey:

- O365/SPO implementation is usually driven by those responsible for information technology and not those responsible for records management.
- Information and records management staff are often not included in planning and implementation phases.
- As a result, records management within O365/SPO environments appears to be mostly ad hoc and reactive.
- Records managers recognise that this situation is not ideal and are looking for ways to improve management of records.
- There is considerable uncertainty about how to manage records effectively within O365/SPO.

2.5 Objectives assessment

Responses showed that agencies were mainly using O365/SPO as collaborative and information sharing spaces.

Business rules and procedures were being used to impose additional control over records within post-implementation O365/SPO environments. These appear to be intended to control records through governing user behaviour.

The technical configuration adjustments reported by agencies were minimal. Where there was integration with an electronic document and records management system (EDRMS) or enterprise content management system (ECMS), records were being managed externally to O365/SPO.

3 Findings

34 responses (four anonymously): 31 via online survey and three separately.

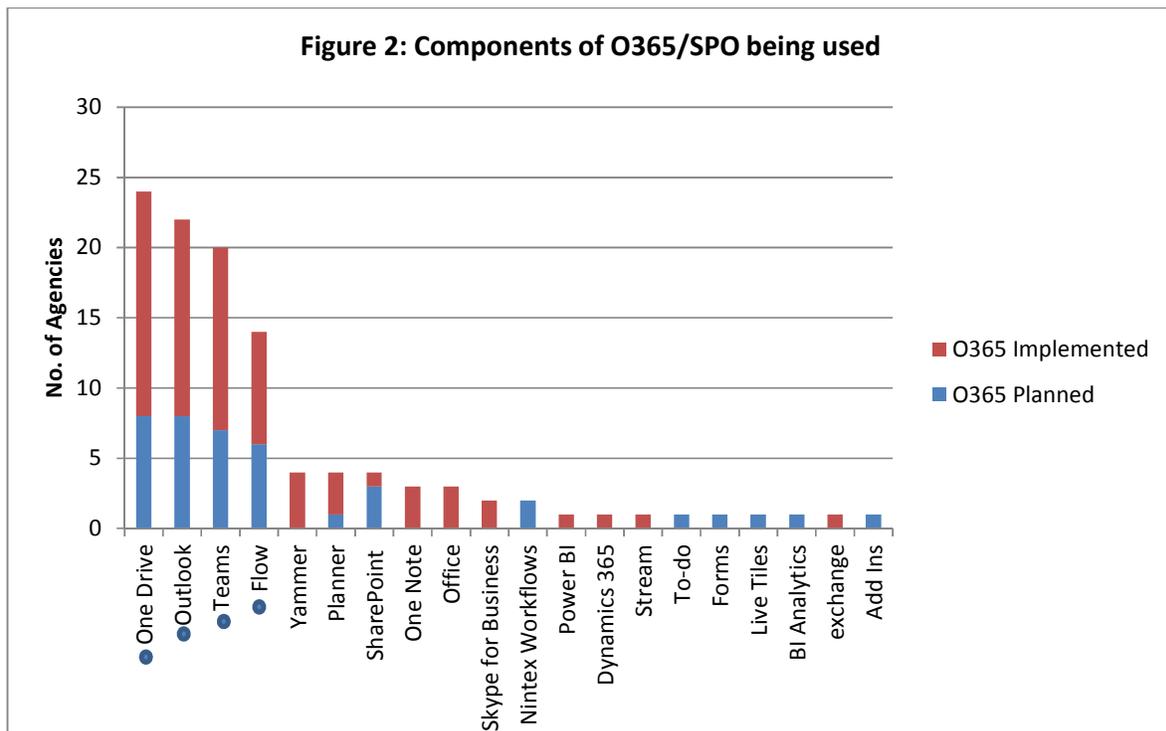
The majority of responses showed that agencies had either implemented both Office 365 (O365) and SharePoint Online (SPO) or were planning to implement both. Therefore, analysis of results considered whether O365 was planned or implemented before exploring the additional data.

Of particular interest were the large number of blank responses to many survey questions (recorded in the Figures as 'no response'). They may indicate gaps in agency information and records management knowledge, capability or responsibility and show us that agencies either did not want to respond or did not know what response to make.

3.1 Driven by IT

Implementation of O36/SPO appears to have been largely driven by those responsible for information technology.

A range of different applications that facilitate collaboration and information sharing were being used by agencies. Figure 2, below, shows the component with the highest application across responses was One Drive (a storage platform) followed by Outlook (an email platform). This is consistent with responses following that O365/SPO was being used to form intranets and to replace network drives.



● Provided option in survey

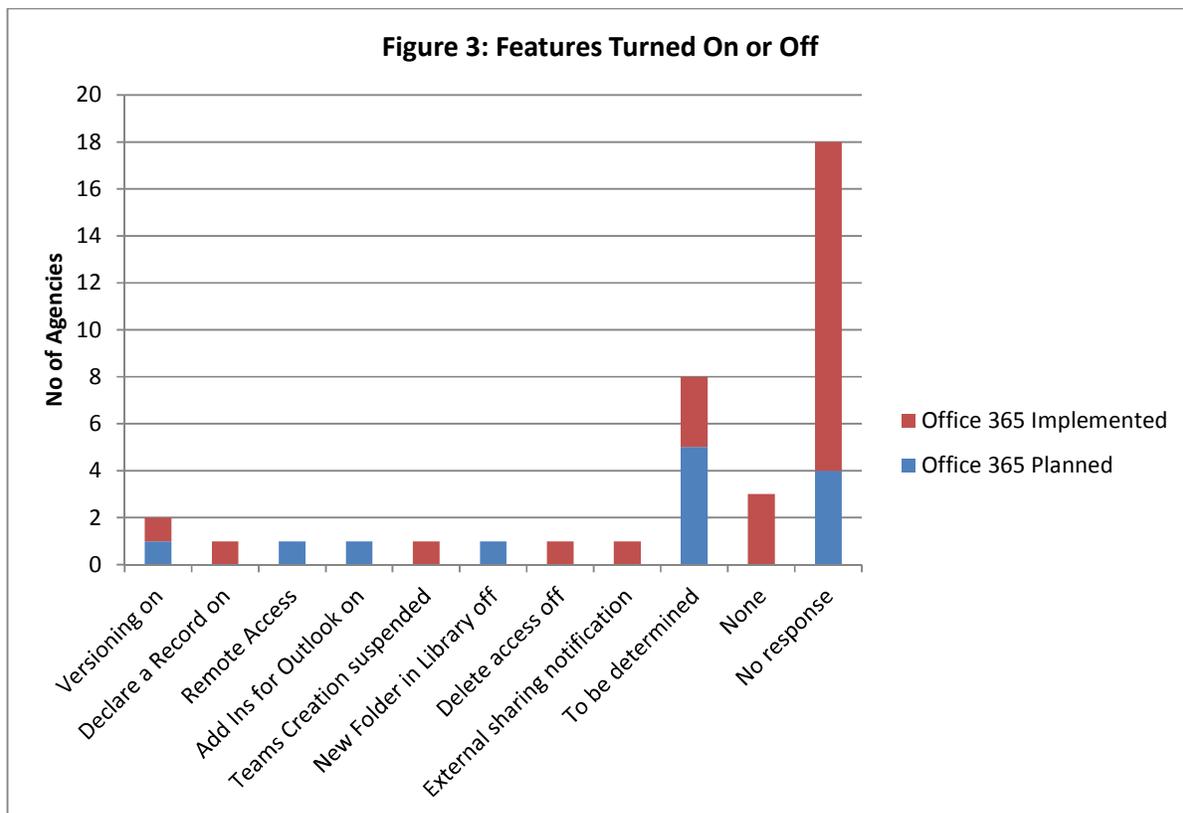
Configuration

Survey responses identified minimal configuration and setting adjustments to manage records in O365/SPO environments, or management through integration with an appropriate external system (see Figures 3, 4 and 5, below).

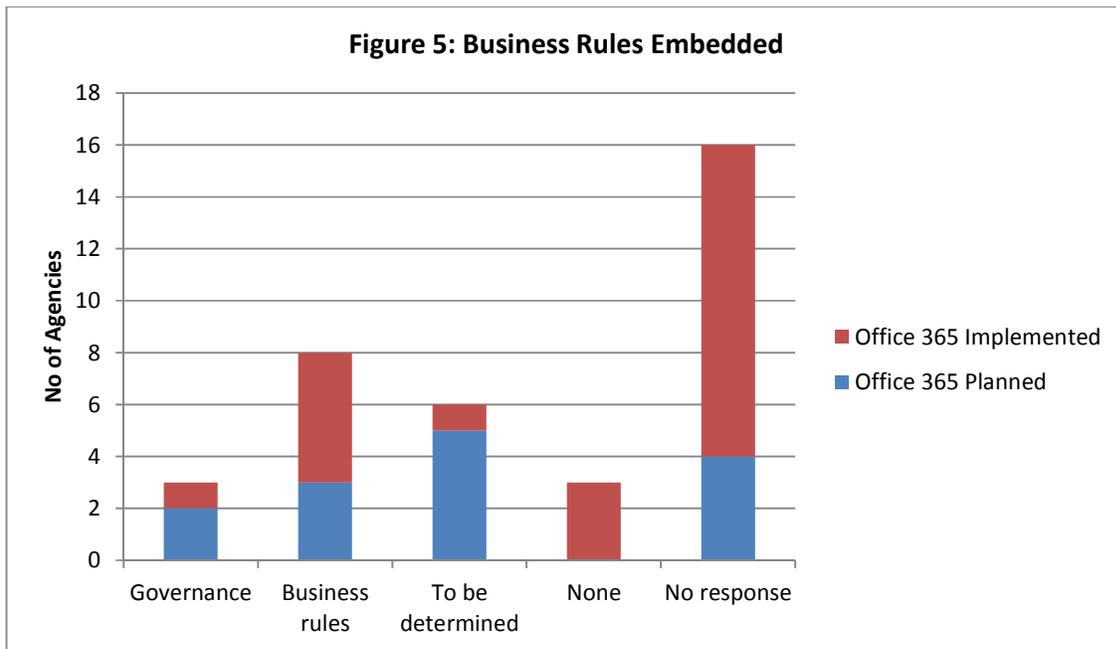
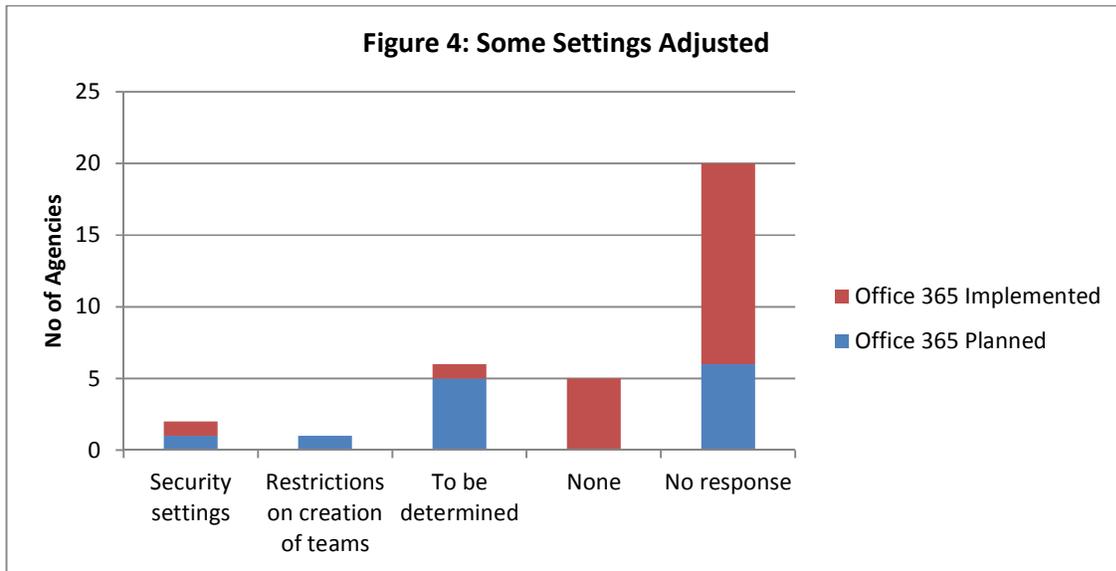
Those who have implemented O365/SPO focused on technical configurations that:

- declared records (that is, a document became un-editable and was accepted as the official record)³
- controlled versioning
- enabled or disabled deletion of records
- notified of documents being shared externally
- suspended Team creation
- improved security.

Business rules and procedures were being used post-implementation to impose behavioural controls over records within O365/SPO environments.



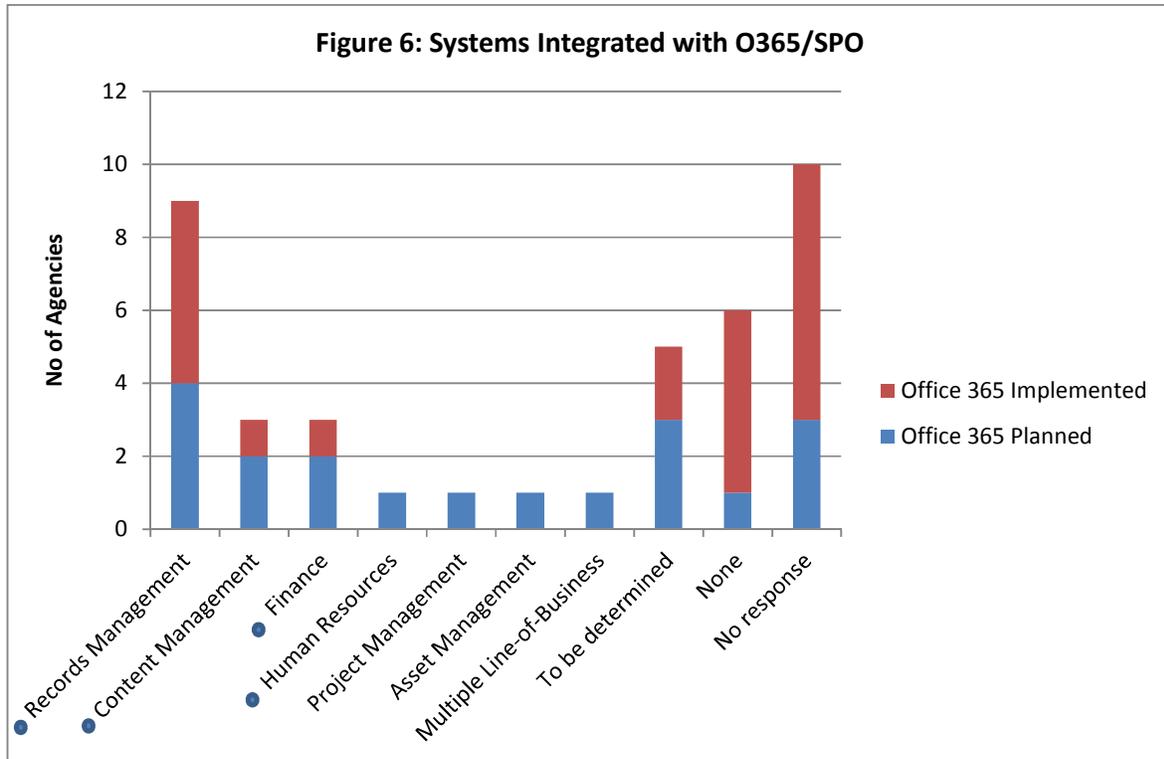
³ Please note that public records include all documents, whether they are declared a record or not. Public records are defined in the *Public Records Act 1973* as being anything created or received by a public officer in the course of their duties.



The majority of respondents left blank questions about O365/SPO configuration. This may be due to configuration being considered more technical and therefore an information technology responsibility rather than a records management one. It flags a disconnection between information technology and information management functions within agencies that is likely to have a negative impact on the effective management of public records.

Integration

There were a range of different systems being integrated with O365/SPO by agencies. Records management system integration was the main one cited for both planned and implemented solutions (see Figure 6, below).



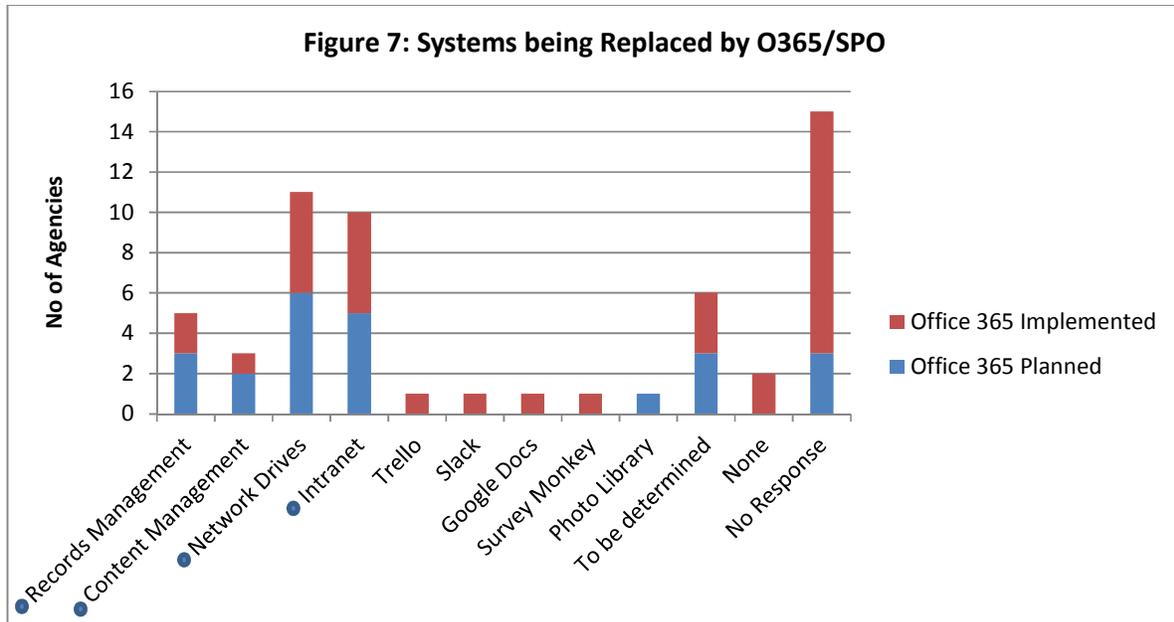
● Provided option in survey

Comments provided demonstrated a frustration by records managers regarding the implementation of O365/SPO. For example:

- “Our systems aren't integrated at all meaning people and teams are using whatever they want. We are actively promoting the importance of records keeping but people have many ungoverned areas to store and utilise information so this is a losing battle.”

Replacement

Exploring what systems were being replaced by O365/SPO (see Figure 7, below), the two main ones mentioned were network drives and intranet. Both of them are known problem areas for effective records management. Moving records from these areas to O365/SPO has therefore been received by some respondents as a positive move that may enable more effective records management. A range of applications that O365/SPO was to replace was also mentioned.



● Provided option in survey

Overall, responses showed that agencies were using O365/SPO as collaborative and information sharing spaces, including:

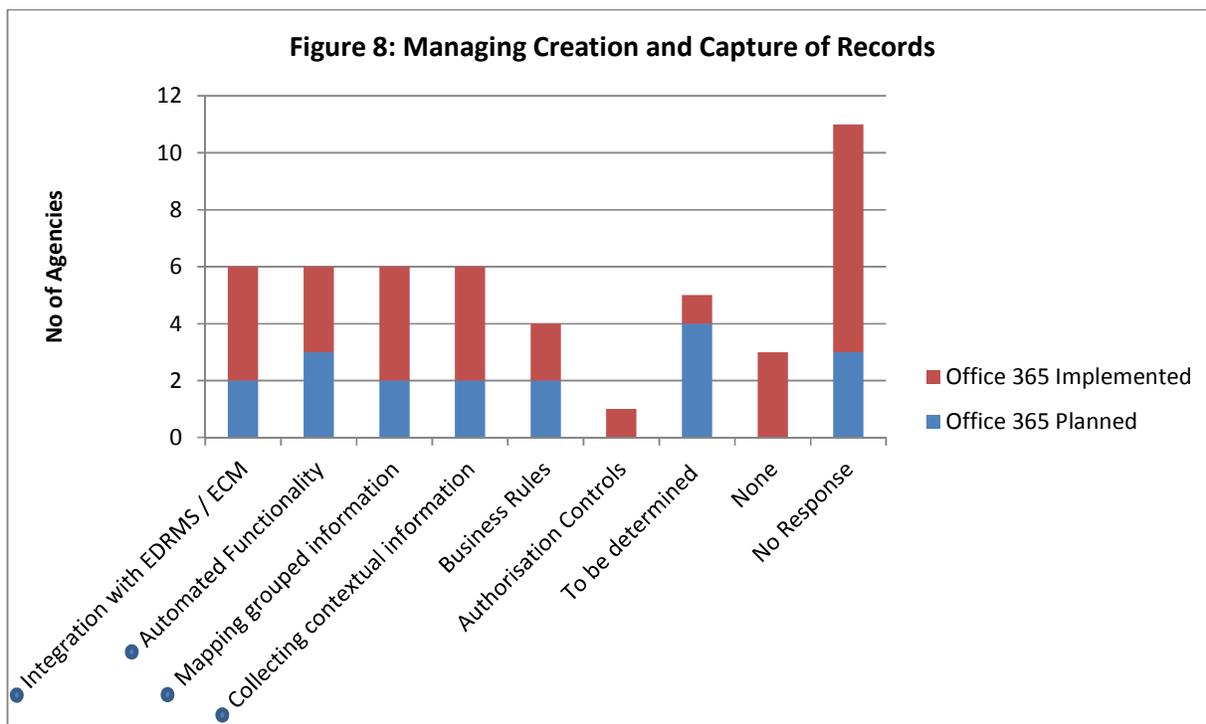
- to replace network drives
- to form agency intranets
- to manage email
- in some cases, to use SPO as the formal records management system.

3.2 Records management is ad hoc and reactive

Several survey questions referred to aspects of how agencies were managing records in an O365/SPO environment. Responses provided are explored in more detail in the sections below and are largely reactive and ad hoc.

Managing the creation and capture of records used

Responses to the question of how agencies managed the creation and capture of records in O365/SPO environments are provided in Figure 8, below. There was an even distribution of responses across the following four provided options: EDRMS or ECM integration, automated functionality, mapping to a business classification scheme (BCS) or retention and disposal authority (RDA), and collecting contextual metadata. The below Figure includes material offered in the comments that were common across agencies surveyed.



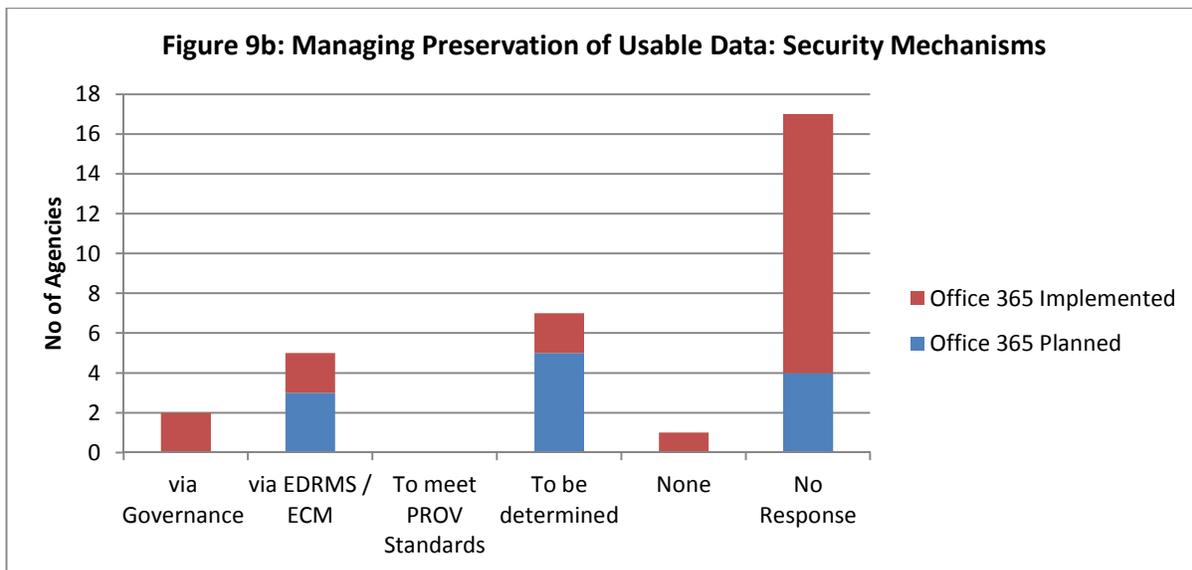
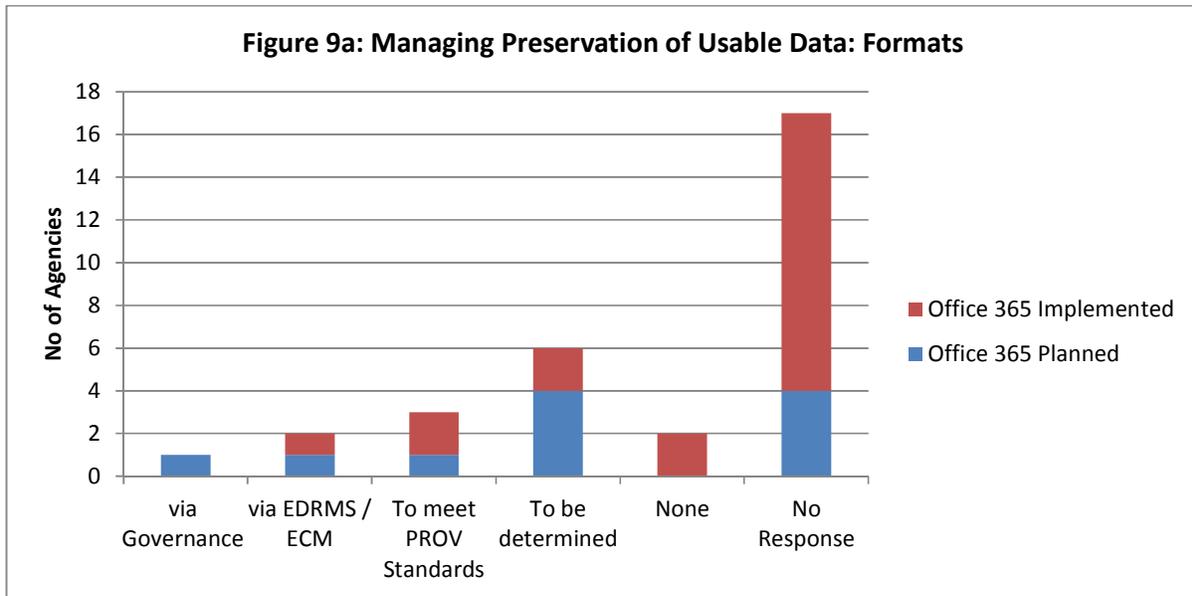
● *Provided option in survey*

Comments clearly showed that agencies were still determining ways to effectively manage records in O365/SPO environments. For example:

- “Something that we need to determine. We are keen not to have another place - outside of our corporate systems - where people can store documents.”
- “I imagine an integration with existing EDRMS but not confirmed, will definitely be looking at as much automation as possible.”

Managing the preservation of usable data

Respondents were asked about managing preservation of usable data and provided options of formats, security mechanisms and other with space to comment on each. The comments provided in each section shared some similarities, which are explored in Figures 9a and 9b (below).

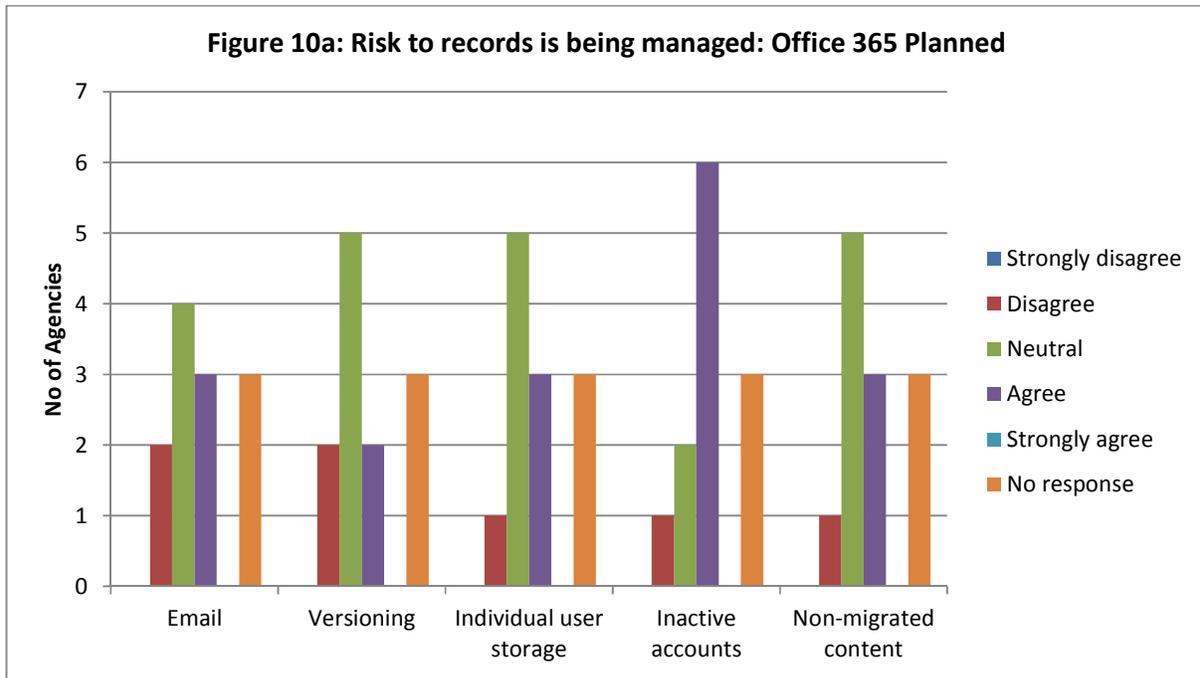


Responses indicated that agencies were looking to manage the preservation of useable data through both formats and security mechanisms. However, responses also indicated some uncertainty in this area. For example, the use of formats to preserve data appeared to be linked to the need to comply with PROV standards. Security mechanisms were more understood and implemented through governance and EDRMS or ECMS.

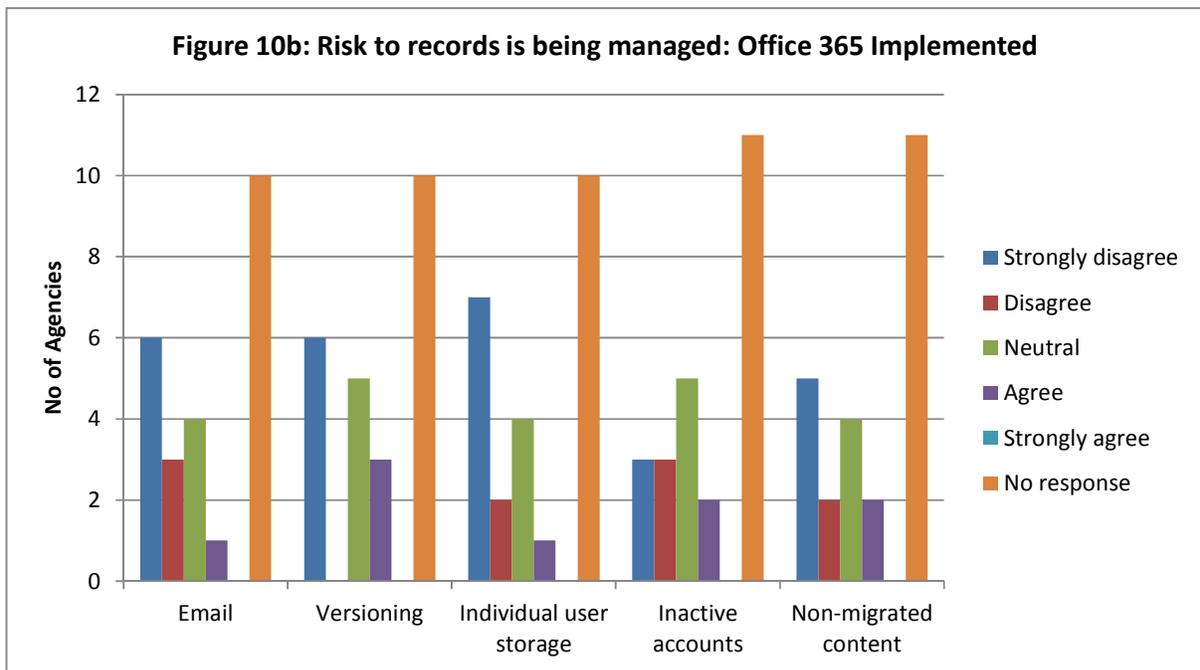
Of the 13 respondents who answered this question, eight stated they were either using formats or security mechanisms to manage preservation of usable data. Of this eight, only two proposed using both.

Managing risk to records

Those planning for O365/SPO had a high number of neutral responses to the question of confidence that risk to records was being managed. The exception was inactive accounts which showed a high agree response (see Figure 10a below). This may be because inactive accounts are often flagged and managed as part of moving to new systems.



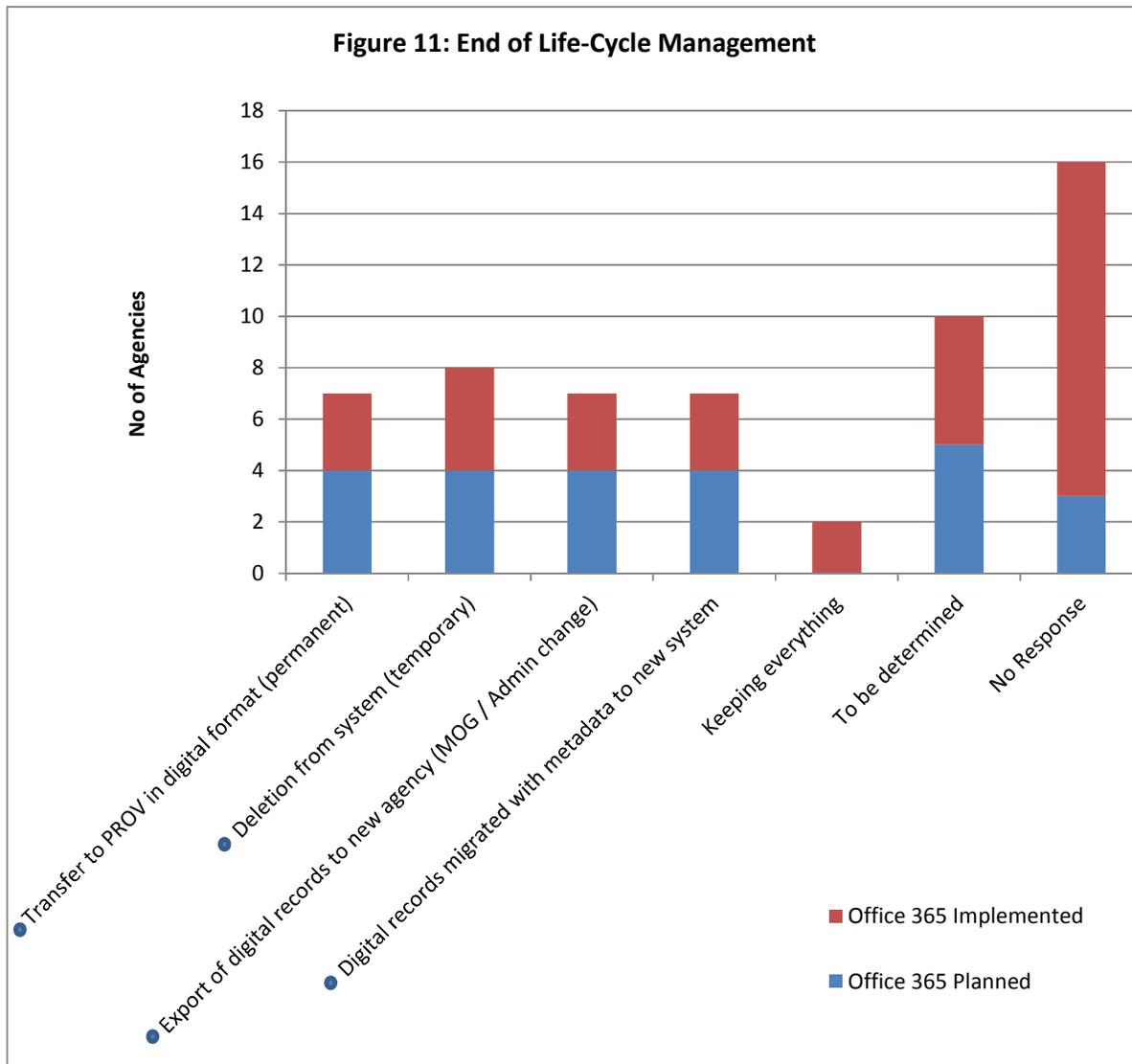
However, the responses for post-implementation (see Figure 10b, below) showed a striking decrease in confidence that risk to records was being managed. There was a broad range of strongly disagree responses, especially for individual user storage. Post-implementation also had a much higher provision of 'no response' answers which reflect the uncertainty expressed in comments across the survey. These results are concerning as they may indicate that O365/SPO was being rolled out with no consideration of how risks to records were to be managed.



Across both planned and implemented groups, no area received a 'strongly agree' that agencies were confident the risk to records was being managed.

Management of O365/SPO records at end of life

Responses showed that agencies were optimistic but cautious about the management of records at the end of life (see Figure 11, below). Reasons for this were partially due to records managers not having the controls or access to the knowledge required to provide an accurate response without integration with an EDRMS or ECM.



● Provided option in survey

Comments included the following:

- “None of these are possible given the lack of business rules.”
- “Records will be managed as required to achieve compliance with PROV standards but we are not at this point of the planning process yet so some issue have not been addressed yet.”
- “All records to be stored in EDRMS or line of business system.”
- “We are applying a risk approach to managing records. I can see a situation where we might have a SP library say for external training opportunities that has an automated deletion process without a formal disposal class

assigned. Items are simply removed as they reach a certain age. Given that most records we collect are in one of the PROV authorities this may never happen.”

- “Everything is currently being kept - unless actively deleted by users or if left in OneDrive after user disabled. Nothing is sentenced. Strategy for remediation has been developed, but projects not prioritised for funding to date - Still working on it. Currently looking at eDiscovery to add sentencing metadata and integration of a records system.”

3.3 Records management to be determined

Respondents were unable to provide many details on the more technical components of implementation, and many responses flagged that research was either needed or being conducted. In some instances respondents indicated that they were actively engaged with IT to find solutions, while others stressed that they were excluded from technical discussions. Therefore, governance frameworks and other mechanisms were being used to influence user behaviour in order to control how records were being managed. These included business rules or policies that could be applied after implementation.

Of clear concern was the lack of confidence in managing risk to records in O365/SPO environments. Reliance on managing records in an EDRMS or ECM or line-of-business systems assumes that:

- the functionality within these systems is sufficient for managing records appropriately
- all corporate records will be located within these systems.

While it was clear that O365/SPO environments held challenges for records managers with regard to the application of records management controls, this is not a new situation. The network drives, intranets and email applications that O365/SPO largely replaced had many similar challenges. The main differences would appear to be that O365/SPO was an external, cloud-based system and that records management people were excluded from discussions regarding its planning and implementation.

Comments for lessons learnt demonstrated that records managers were actively exploring practical solutions. For example:

- “Governance is the critical component from lessons learnt with the SharePoint on-premises implementation that we did previously. IT and Executive support is also important.”
- “Have a project plan which includes the development of business rules, change management and training.”
- “Be prepared for a mind shift. A new way of managing data and information. A new approach to valuing data and information.”
- “Business rules are vital. Some level of control is required, naming conventions, assigned ownership of the information.”
- “Given the chance users will store away from the ECM in O365.”
- “To have records officers as the owners of the system, so that the configuration has some structure. It is not a pure configuration and implement type of product - Microsoft are continually updating and changing things.”
- “Ensure that systems and processes are tested thoroughly.”

3.4 Search for solutions

The majority of issues that have been flagged by agencies regarding how to manage records appropriately in O365/SPO were due to needing to think about records differently. Traditional records management methods, while continuing to be useful, were not necessarily the best methods to apply in a user focused, Microsoft O365/SPO environment. In this time of transition, new ways of thinking about records management and the best ways to minimise risk to records in software-as-a-service Cloud solutions are being explored. Collaboration across teams to take advantage of different skills and knowledge, shifting perspective from compliance to user focused management, and being open to new ideas are essential to managing records in this environment.

4 Recommendations

Recommendations for effective management of O365/SPO Records

PROV recommends that Victorian government agencies undertake the following actions:

1. Investigate the administrative applications and tools used to manage records in O365/SPO.
2. Conduct a gap analysis to determine whether these controls are sufficient to manage records within their agency or whether additional controls/configuration/integration is needed.
3. Assess the culture of the agency to determine the probability and impact of users not complying with records management controls within the O365/SPO environment.
4. Set controls for records that consider the user experience and minimise risk of non-compliance.
5. Where third party plug-ins are to be used, develop and maintain an integration management plan that specifies how the impact of Microsoft O365/SPO updates and upgrades will be monitored and risk to records minimised.
6. Determine where automation can be best applied to minimise risk to records and improve effective control of records.
7. Be aware of Microsoft O365/SPO records management functionality and how it can be used to manage disposal of agency records.
8. Conduct a gap assessment and management plan against disposal requirements to determine and minimise risk to records.
9. Consider and seek to minimise risk to records when determining whether to migrate records from a decommissioned system into O365/SPO.

5 Appendix one: short survey

Questions and methodology

5.1 Questions

Question 1. What is your agency's status with regard to Office 365 and/or SharePoint?

	Is implemented	Is planned	No plans
Office 365...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SharePoint...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you have answered 'No plans' to both of these questions, you do not need to continue the survey. Thank you for your time.

Please save and return your survey to Al.Hunter@prov.vic.gov.au

Question 2. What components of Office 365/SharePoint will you be implementing/have you implemented?

- One Drive
- Teams
- Outlook
- Flow

Other (please specify)

Question 3. What configuration of Office 365/SharePoint have you done to improve recordkeeping performance?

Some features turned off or on

Some settings adjusted to agency requirements

Some business rules or procedures embedded

Question 4. What systems are you integrating with Office 365 and/or SharePoint?

- Records management systems
- Content management systems
- Finance systems
- HR systems

Other (please specify)

Question 5. What systems are you replacing with Office 365 and/or SharePoint?

- Records management systems
- Content management systems
- Network drives
- Intranet

Other (please specify)

Question 6. How are you managing the creation and capture of records used within Office 365/SharePoint?

[Check at that apply]

- Integration with an EDRMS or ECM
- Automated functionality, for example to classify and action
- Mapping grouped information, for example libraries and sites mapped to business classification scheme and / or Retention and Disposal Authority classes to classify and action
- Collecting contextual information via metadata fields

Other (please specify)

Question 7. How are you managing preservation of usable data?

Formats chosen for data meet accessibility requirements for duration of the retention period (please specify)

Security mechanisms used ensure that only those authorised to view, amend or delete records are able to do so (please specify)

Other (please specify)

Question 8. Are you confident you are managing the following areas of risk to records in Office 365/SharePoint?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Emails	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Versions of records	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Individual user storage	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Inactive accounts and inactive users	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Non-migrated content	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Question 9. How are you managing Office 365/SharePoint records at the end of lifecycle?

- Sentenced permanent records will be exported to PROV in the appropriate digital format
- Sentenced temporary records will be deleted from the system by those authorised to do so in accordance with the relevant Retention and Disposal Authority
- Records of machinery of government or administrative change will be exported from the system to the next agency in accordance with agreed Transfer of Custodianship plans
- Data will be migrated to a new system along with all contextual metadata upon Office 365/SharePoint being decommissioned

Other (please specify)

Question 10. What were the most important lessons learned regarding procurement, configuration and implementation of Office 365/SharePoint?