

GroupWise to Microsoft 365 Migration Basics



For organizations using legacy systems like GroupWise, Microsoft 365 offers clear benefits, from [improved eDiscovery](#) to scalability and easy remote access. However, migrating from GroupWise presents unique challenges. Understanding and following GroupWise to Microsoft 365 Migration basics will help smooth the way to a successful migration.

GroupWise Presents Critical Limitations

While GroupWise has powered corporate email systems for decades, an infrastructure designed for 1980s workloads struggles to handle modern demands. In particular, GroupWise personal archives present potentially costly issues.

In the first place, end users manage their own archives. That means that very little maintenance occurs. And when users continue to add emails to the archives over several years, they eventually run up against content limitations. This can result in lost or corrupted data.

Secondly, GroupWise lacks up-to-date eDiscovery features, in addition to the difficulty inherent in monitoring individual archives. For instance, GroupWise does not offer auditing to provide a chain of custody and demonstrate data integrity. It also has limited search capabilities and an inefficient retention process.

Significant Challenges Complicate GroupWise Migrations

Migrating to Microsoft 365 solves [personal archive issues](#) while offering powerful features for eDiscovery and [regulatory compliance](#). As with any system that has been in place for many years, however, large mailboxes and poorly configured systems can prove a minefield. Also, finding and processing unmanaged personal archives requires the right tools and expertise.

For example, archives can live virtually anywhere, from personal laptops to network servers. A single user may have more than one archive, and archives can become fragmented across multiple locations. Processing the archives, once they are located, takes time.



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In addition to addressing challenges unique to GroupWise, any successful cloud migration requires careful preparation and communication.

1. The quality of the **initial project assessment** will determine migration success. The migration team, including both stakeholders and technical personnel, begin with a thorough system review. This includes determining the number, size and location of mailboxes and archives.
2. Next, the team will **collect the data**, catalog it, and process it. This step can prove complex, depending on the quality and location of personal archives. For instance, archives located on local drives may need to be centralized. This aids copying and helps to ensure content is not being updated during the process.

Data collection presents an opportunity to review the organization's retention policy to determine if all content in personal archives should be migrated. Potentially, some older data can be filtered out of the system prior to migration.

3. Before transitioning GroupWise data to Microsoft 365, the team needs to **set up the target system**. For instance, users need to be provisioned in Azure Active Directory. This is also a good time to set up email policies. Automating [email and retention policies](#) facilitates regulatory compliance and streamlines processes.

4. The weeks leading up to a migration also provide a good time to conduct **end user training** and prepare employees for the new system. When users know what [differences between GroupWise and Outlook](#) to expect, they will have a better experience.
5. For the **actual data migration**, the organization may choose to migrate mailboxes gradually or all at once. In fact, conducting a pilot migration with a representative group will help iron out any issues. In the end, if the migration team has done its homework, a successful migration will involve minimal disruption to end users.

NOTE: Keep in mind that GroupWise Archives use database technology created when the average hard drive size was only 40MB, and they generally lack regular maintenance. Consequently, some archives may require considerable remediation if organizations are looking to achieve higher success rates on migrated data.

Throughout the process, frequent communication will help end users know what to expect and ensure a positive user experience.



Ensure Success with Proven Migration Experts

Organizations have a couple of options for conducting a GroupWise to Microsoft 365 migration. They can run a DIY migration using Microsoft's FastTrack service or a third-party migration tool. However, particularly with [GroupWise migrations](#), the complexities involved require in-depth technical understanding not available in most companies.

Most organizations choose to partner with a migration expert such as Messaging Architects. Our consultants bring a wealth of experience with both GroupWise and Microsoft 365 environments, including troublesome personal archives. We [migrate data behind the scenes](#), ensuring a positive experience for end users and IT staff alike.