

Microsoft is putting together a Microsoft 365 subscription for home users

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Microsoft has had success in the enterprise space with its Microsoft 365 subscription, which bundles Office 365, Windows 10, and remote management with Enterprise Mobility + Security. Its home-oriented Office 365 subscriptions have also been growing steadily, with 32.5 million subscriptions as of the company's most recent financial reports. And now Microsoft is planning to bring these things together with a Microsoft 365 subscription aimed at non-corporate users, reports Mary Jo Foley.

Microsoft 365 Consumer would be a subscription bundle with a consumer focus. Foley notes that there have been job advertisements alluding to such a product, and the move would seem to be consistent with the company's plan to re-engage with consumers. At its Inspire partner event earlier this year, the company said that it wanted to target "professional consumers" by offering software and services to enhance their "Modern Life and Devices." The meaning of this is not entirely clear, but it seems to mean that the company will continue to make its services work better wherever you use them (greater support for iOS and Android phones). Syncing and replication will ensure that your work and current context moves

seamlessly between devices.

Less clear is what a Microsoft 365 Consumer bundle would actually include. Office 365 is an obvious component; it's already being sold to consumers, and it remains the heart of Microsoft's productivity vision. But beyond that? Windows 10 is, for home users, functionally free already. There have long been fears/rumors/speculation that Microsoft will move to a monthly Windows subscription model for consumers, but there are no signs that this is happening. Given the way Windows 10 has been positioned—the “last version” of Windows that will be updated and upgraded indefinitely—it's hard to imagine it ever happening.

Foley speculates that Skype, Bing, Cortana, and mobile apps such as Outlook Mobile could be part of it. A Skype bundle makes some sense, as Skype already has paid-for elements; an extra couple of bucks on top of an Office 365 subscription to get telephony and calls would have some logic to it. The rest, though, isn't obvious. Another possibility? Include subscription hardware in the deal. Xbox is another area where Microsoft sells subscriptions, and Microsoft has in the past sold subscription bundles that include Xbox Gold. But there's little obvious synergy.

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