



Security Bulletin: What is the Microsoft Security Score and why you should use it as your security benchmark?

For those of you who use Exchange Online, Office 365, Azure Active Directory, Teams, and other Microsoft cloud products, this bulletin is for you. Ransomware and other forms of cyber-attacks have become the order of the day for multitudes of industries in the wake of the pandemic. Most, if not all companies, are poised to significantly enhance their security investments this year to counter the grave threat presented by cyber-attacks. It's easy to understand why if you look at the statistics. According to [IBM](#), the United States had the dubious distinction of being the country with the highest average total cost of a data breach (\$8.64 million) in 2020. However, with the pandemic and the mainstream remote work environment it has ushered in, sales of cloud products, like Microsoft 365 have skyrocketed. These products [generated \\$17.7 billion in revenue](#) for Microsoft in the first quarter of 2021, a steep increase of 33 percent from the previous year. Microsoft has now gone ahead and committed to investing [\\$20 Billion](#) in further research and advancement of its security solutions over the next five years.

No organization can expect to solve all security complexities in one go. Microsoft has provided the Microsoft Secure Score tool as a robust security benchmark and starting point for your organization, irrespective of the current Systems environment. This is valuable for organizations trying to grapple with complex security issues.

Understanding Microsoft Secure Score

Microsoft Secure Score can be understood as a measurement of an organization's security posture. In this framework, a higher score signifies that the organization has taken more improvement actions to enhance its security stance. The framework is available in the Microsoft 365 Defender Portal: <https://security.microsoft.com/securescore>

Microsoft Secure Score also provides organizations with highly useful recommendations that can improve your organization's security. All of this is available through a centralized dashboard in the Microsoft 365 Defender portal. Your IT team can easily monitor your Microsoft 365 environment and work on the security of your Microsoft 365 identities, apps, and devices.

Example Microsoft Secure Score Report: (<https://security.microsoft.com/securescore>)

Microsoft Secure Score

[Overview](#) [Improvement actions](#) [History](#) [Metrics & trends](#)

Microsoft Secure Score is a representation of your organization's security posture, and your opportunity to improve it.

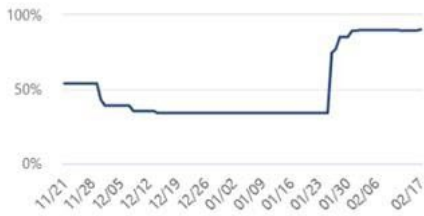
Applied filters:

Your secure score

Include ▼

Secure Score: 90.16%

110/122 points achieved



Breakdown points by: Category ▼



Actions to review



Top improvement actions

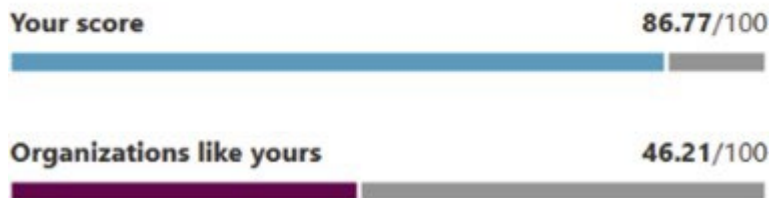
| Improvement action | Score impact | Status | Category |
|---|--------------|---|----------|
| Create an OAuth app policy to notify you about ne... | +3.28% | <input type="radio"/> To address | Apps |
| Do not allow users to grant consent to unmanaged... | +3.28% | <input type="radio"/> To address | Identity |
| Create a custom activity policy to get alerts about ... | +1.64% | <input type="radio"/> To address | Apps |
| Deploy a log collector to discover shadow IT activity | +0.82% | <input type="radio"/> To address | Apps |
| Turn on customer lockbox feature | +0.82% | <input type="radio"/> To address | Apps |
| Require MFA for administrative roles | +8.2% | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Alternate mitigaidentity | |
| Ensure all users can complete multi-factor authenti... | +7.38% | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Alternate mitigaidentity | |

How Secure Score helps organizations

Here are the ways in which Microsoft Secure Score helps protect businesses from cyber threats. These include:

- Comprehensive reporting on the current state of your company's security posture.
- Progressive enhancement of the security posture through better discoverability, visibility, guidance, and control.
- MSS makes handy comparisons with established benchmarks for similar businesses. It can also help companies establish key performance indicators (KPIs).

Comparison



- Companies get a comprehensive overview of their entire security framework through robust and easy visualizations of metrics and historical trends, integration with other Microsoft products, score comparison with peers, and more. You can even use MSS to understand if and when your vendors and service providers have addressed recommended actions.

Your Microsoft secure score & recommended actions

As mentioned before, your Microsoft 365 Secure Score is a comprehensive reflection of your current state of security. Scoring low on the MSS is a red flag that you will immediately need to take steps to remedy the vulnerabilities in your security posture. The score is also accompanied by multiple recommendations that your organization can and should follow to improve your score. Some of these actions can award you even if you complete them partially, and some will only impact your score when you complete them fully. Are also actions that you can take but will not help to improve your overall score. The MSS gets updated in real-time and immediately reflects changes, if any, in your overall security practices and posture.

Achieving a score of 80% is an excellent target for most small businesses, as reaching 100% is difficult unless a significant investment is made in more Microsoft licensing. Once you have your score, you can start on rectifying vulnerabilities and addressing critical security issues right away. This is true irrespective of whether your security is managed by a third-party service provider or managed in-house. . We've noticed that some security "fixes" like adding multi-factor authentication is one of the best ways to move the security score over 60%. For a managed IT service provider, you could also ask to see their own MSS. If they score lower than you - it might be time to look for an alternative who's better versed with managing security. A score of 60% should be your minimum benchmark. If they end up scoring higher than you, you should ask to replicate the results in your organization or even improve on it.

Conclusion

Microsoft 365 Secure Score provides a great baseline for not just evaluating the security of your O365 environment but also to gauge the health of your own company's security health. The MSS provides a straightforward path for companies to manage their journey to better security. If your company uses products such as Exchange Online, Office 365, Azure Active Directory, Teams, and other Microsoft cloud products the Microsoft Security Score needs to be a part of your security stack. Check it out here <https://security.microsoft.com/securescore> and if you have questions or concerns contact security@dcgla.com