



DP ARCHITECTS PTE LTD

**Customer:** DP Architects  
**Website:** [www.dpa.com.sg](http://www.dpa.com.sg)  
**Customer Size:** 1,200 employees  
**Country or Region:** Singapore  
**Industry:** Professional services—  
Architecture

#### Customer Profile

Headquartered in the Republic of Singapore, DP Architects is a global architectural practice with 12 offices and approximately 1,200 employees, including more than 800 architects.

#### Software and Services

- Microsoft Office 365
  - Microsoft Exchange Online
  - Microsoft Lync Online

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## Architectural Firm Enhances Business Continuity, Productivity with Hosted Email

**“By moving to Office 365, we achieved two critical goals. We gained a disaster recovery solution without incurring the costs of expanding our datacenter, and we kept our architects happy and productive.”**

Jackson Keung, Deputy Director, ICT Department, DP Architects

DP Architects (DPA) relies on email to conduct business. But with on-premises servers running its messaging solution at headquarters, IT staff worried about business continuity. The 1,200-employee firm uses the Microsoft Outlook email client, so DPA chose Microsoft Office 365 for cloud-based email services. DPA gained a cost-effective disaster recovery solution for email and will use Lync Online for instant messaging.

#### Business Needs

DP Architects (DPA) was founded in 1967, two years after Singapore’s national independence. The firm has designed many important public projects for Singapore government entities, commercial developers, and institutions. DPA is well known for its expertise in large-scale projects, including Singapore Sports Hub, Asia’s first integrated sports, leisure, entertainment, and lifestyle destination and Resorts World Sentosa, which has six hotels, several entertainment centers, and theme parks. Internationally, in 2008, DPA completed the 550,000-square-meter Dubai Mall, which had 75 million visitors in 2013.

As the practice expands, IT staff faced the challenge of scaling the firm’s infrastructure to support a rapidly growing business, while providing employees with state-of-the-art computer-aided design (CAD) software and high-end PCs. Although DPA housed its servers in a datacenter at the firm’s main office complex, business continuity was still a concern, especially with regards to Microsoft Exchange Server 2010, which the firm relied on for email communications.

“Our architects use primarily two programs: CAD to draw and email to communicate,” says Jackson Keung, Deputy Director of the ICT Department at DP Architects. “So for us, business continuity equals email continuity. We had

two servers hosting our email service; it would be disastrous if DPA had to tell clients that email was down or we had lost important messages.”

As a cost-effective way to acquire a robust disaster recovery solution for its email service, the ICT Department began to explore cloud-based options. The company worried about unforeseen incidents that could shut down the head office because it is located in a busy shopping mall in downtown Singapore. “When we told the executive board that it could take months for us to get back up and running after a disaster, the board was convinced that we had to move to the cloud,” Keung says. “We began looking for a solution that would not disrupt our architects in any way.”

## Solution

DP Architects evaluated Microsoft Office 365 and other similar products in the market. Microsoft Office 365 unites familiar Microsoft Office applications, such as Microsoft Outlook, which offers an email and calendaring service, with the power of Microsoft productivity servers into one connected, online solution.

“The decision to choose Office 365 hinged on the fact that Office 365 works seamlessly with Outlook. Our firm has a strong preference to continue with Outlook,” says Keung. “Also, we saw the potential of instant messaging, a capability of Lync Online, which is part of Office 365.”

DPA is also interested in deploying Integrated Rights Management, included in Exchange Online. IT staff are thinking about using Active Directory Rights Management Services, an information protection technology in the Windows Server operating system to enable online and

offline protection of DPA proprietary information in email messages and attachments. This capability is not supported within other competitors’ products.

DPA acquired 1,485 Office 365 licenses through a Microsoft Enterprise Agreement. It used the flexible licensing plans available with Office 365, deploying 1,235 E1 licenses for staff and 250 E3 licenses for executives. E3 licenses have unlimited personal email archiving capability.

The board stipulated that the migration to a cloud-based solution be completely transparent to employees. Instead of migrating an entire mailbox at once, with Office 365, DPA can stream data while migrating mailboxes, minimizing employee disruption. “We did not broadcast to employees the move to the cloud and their work life continued as normal,” says Keung. “With Outlook, you can download headers first and attachments later, so there was only minimal impact on performance.”

DPA used Office Migration Planning Manager to help migrate employees’ mailboxes from Exchange Server 2010 to Exchange Online. “Overall, the deployment went very well. The IT staff members appreciate that they can easily control our Office 365 environment through the administration console,” says Keung.

## Benefits

By choosing Office 365, DP Architects gained a cost-effective, scalable disaster recovery solution for its email service, additional interoperable communication and collaboration capabilities, and a close relationship with a company that understands the needs of a global

enterprise. “We moved to the cloud purely for business continuity, but Office 365 gives us other collaboration services that we can build on,” says Keung.

### Enabled Disaster Recovery

DPA now has a reliable disaster recovery solution for its most critical business productivity software: email. “By moving to Office 365, we achieved two critical goals,” says Keung. “We gained a disaster recovery solution without incurring the costs of expanding our datacenter, and we kept our architects happy and productive.”

### Gained Real-Time Communications

DPA will use Lync Online for real-time communications among global offices, even in China where Internet bandwidth is variable. “We’re planning a big launch for Lync Online, giving everyone headsets with our logo and encouraging everyone to use the service,” says Keung. “We like the idea of federated services, and we look forward to exploring how we can manage Lync Online to control the data that’s going back and forth.”

### Acquired a Strategic Business Relationship

DPA was happy with the support it received from Microsoft for its first foray into cloud computing. The firm anticipates a lasting relationship with Microsoft. “The Microsoft team who supported us through the deployment was fantastic,” concludes Keung. “The ability to collaborate with Microsoft on an enterprise level is what we’re looking for. Microsoft understands that we are running a global business and that’s a key requirement for us.”