

# Product Brief

## Microsoft Delve

*Daniel W. Rasmus, Principal Analyst*

### What is it?

Delve is a machine learning technology that integrates with Microsoft Office 365. Delve discovers patterns within Office 365 using analysis from documents, calendars and communications, including e-mail. The technology provides personalized, contextual awareness of information that is relevant to a particular knowledge worker's current activity.

### Who makes it?

Microsoft Corporation

NASDAQ: MSFT

### What does it do?

Delve mines information from multiple sources within the Office 365 environment, including PowerPoint, Excel and Word documents in OneDrive, as well as information about people derived from Active Directory. It also monitors conversations and events from Exchange and Yammer. From these sources it recognizes relationships between concepts like time and meeting, along with relationships like "works for," "viewed by" and "presented to me." This rich relationship data becomes what Microsoft calls the "Office Graph."

### Why is it important?

Of all the technology companies, Microsoft is best positioned to execute on next generation work experiences. This is the first publicly available software that provides practical discovery services to information workers without the need for explicit metadata or subscriptions to alerts. Microsoft is now moving from search to "information finding you."

### Where can I get it?

Delve is available as part of the Office 365 for business subscription available [here](#).

### When it is available?

Delve is available as of September 2014 on a limited basis. Delve will be rolled out to Office 365 Business Essentials and Business Premium, as well as Office 365 Small Business, Small Business Premium and Midsize Business plans, starting in January 2015.

### How much does it cost?

Delve is included in the Office 365 enterprise, business, academic and government subscriptions.

Delve is not included in home or personal subscriptions.

### Where is it available?

Delve will be available wherever Office 365 is available globally. It will be rolled out in phases.

### Commentary

Delve offers the beginnings of a revolution in the way information workers interact with information. Currently, information is stored in file systems using individual or team taxonomies, and most file technology is only capable of managing a single relationship, such as: *this-file* is-in *this-folder*. Some operating systems now permit metadata tags in addition to file location. Sophisticated collaboration and document management platforms offer full taxonomies for categorizing and relating documents. Unfortunately, outside of a few enterprises that depend on the accuracy of their metadata, most organizations, and even fewer individuals, ever take advantage of the organizing features of their operating system or collaboration environments. People and the organizations work for, rely on memory and search to locate digital assets.

Delve machine learning and pattern recognition builds "finger prints" of relationships rather than extracting features and populating metadata fields that use search to deliver results. Delve's discoveries proactively appear based on what the information worker is doing, rather than waiting for them to search for something they need.

As a standalone tool, Delve is useful, but not as effective as it will be when embedded into Office apps, SharePoint, Outlook, Yammer and IE. This integration of non-Microsoft content will be a major milestone.

Microsoft is finally delivering a technology to the workplace that essentially mimics sophisticated machine learning employed in advertising platforms like Google and Microsoft's own Bing.

As the largest provider of work experience software, it is important that Microsoft move beyond content creation to management and discovery, and eventually to attention management. Delve is a good first step.