A view from TDI

A Review of the Recently Announced Microsoft/Intapp Strategic Alliance

A view from Transform Data

Transform Data, as a partner of the Intapp Collaboration and Content suite, and previously Repstor Custodian, review the recent announcement around the Microsoft/Intapp strategic alliance news. Here we take a view on what it could mean and what drove it. This announcement is not the only one we have seen over the last year which initially makes one major point, the desire to have an alliance with Microsoft is testimony to the fact that MS 365 has become a strategy for Legal and Professional Service firms, not just around office productivity, but the whole MS 365 application stack.

intapp™ Microsoft

It is not just software vendors that seek such an alliance, Microsoft themselves have drivers. The obvious one has been for alliances to drive Azure storage uptake. However, reviewing the Intapp alliance shows that the drivers here are application driven as if you take their content solution, the Azure storage remains with the client and not Intapp. It is fair to say that Microsoft have directly tried to enter the Legal and Professional Service sector in the past and the results were at best mixed. This alliance seems to show that Microsoft see vertical market cloud application providers as the route to secure vertical markets and to drive cloud application adoption at a faster rate. By selecting vendors carefully, Microsoft will also protect a vertical market from vendors that may not be so Microsoft aligned. So, although storage is part of the benefit there is certainly a much higher-level strategy.

So why Intapp? Well, let us not forget Repstor, before they were acquired by Intapp in 2021 they had already been a partner of Microsoft with their Custodian MS 365 based solution and had already reaped benefits. A SharePoint based DMS that easily integrated into Microsoft Outlook, Office and Teams along with the ability to support co-authoring within the native MS 365 stack. Fast forward and Repstor are now the Content and Collaboration solution of Intapp who already have an array of Legal and Professional Service organisation solutions, and this was a key addition to the Intapp product family. However, two other major recent Intapp developments must have been appealing to Microsoft. The first being that Intapp had already announced that going forward all sales of any of their solutions would be cloud only. The second being that Intapp raised $270M in a public share offering in 2021, a significant amount for investment and R&D. All these factors must have made Intapp a perfect target for such an alliance to meet Microsoft's vertical market strategy.

So, what will it all mean in real terms going forward? For ourselves as a Repstor/Intapp partner we have seen benefits for many years by supplying a solution based on SharePoint. It has easily enabled us to deliver Matter Management, Contract Management, Records Management, Reporting, Archiving, and Advanced Searching solutions utilising the full MS Stack for our in-ihouse, law firm and professional service clients. The Intapp Content & Collaboration suite already benefits from tight MS Office integration, including native co-authoring, and a platform to easily extend the solution to enable internal and external collaboration.

Beyond this it seems certain that MS Teams will be an immediate focus for R&D within Intapp. Although partners like ourselves will be making all our offerings MS Teams friendly, Intapp will certainly embed increasingly more of their entire product family within MS Teams, and not just as a website tab. Intapp and their partners will work closely to deliver ever more business driven Team Sites. We will surely see Intapp embed solutions in addition to content into MS Teams such as Intapp Time, Conflicts, Deal Management and Contacts. While Web applications will stay, MS Teams is where organisations want professionals to land to get a 360-degree view of a client, project, matter, or entity.

Looking even further forward, we already see that Intapp have extended access to Microsoft product teams under the alliance which will give advance notice of roadmap. This has already sparked discussions around more emerging technologies such as Viva and Syntax. The process of applying business cases is still ongoing but being able to capture topics or clauses, companies, or names within contracts, and determining actions provides an exciting opportunity for Intapp and their partners.

One thing is for sure, the drive and ability for organisations to seriously adopt MS 365 beyond office is here and here to stay and flourish.