Edition **Seven**

uiq

Ultima

Insight Quarterly

Welcome to our seventh edition of UiQ.

Welcome to the September issue of UiQ, the Ultima Intelligence Quarterly where we share our insights, expertise and thought leadership on the latest trends and challenges facing businesses today and how Ultima can help.

You will also hear from our new CFO, Jamie Beaumont, who will share his vision and strategy for growth in the 'View from the Top' article. Jamie brings a wealth of experience and expertise in finance, operations and business development, and he is a great addition to our leadership team.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue of UiQ, and we look forward to hearing your feedback and comments. If you have any questions or queries, or if you would like to learn more about how Ultima can help you with your IT needs, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Thank you for your continued trust and support.

Scott, CEO, Ultima

Scott Dodds,
Ultima CEO

View from the Top

A Conversation with Jamie Beaumont, Ultima's New CFO

Jamie Beaumont joined Ultima as the new CFO in July 2024, bringing with him over 20 years of experience in finance, operations and business development. He has held senior roles in various sectors, including technology, telecommunications, media and entertainment, and he has a track record of driving growth, profitability and innovation. In this exclusive interview, he shares his vision and strategy for Ultima's future, and how he plans to support Ultima's mission to be the partner of choice for business technology transformation.

Q: What attracted you to join Ultima as the CFO?

Technical Governance and Policy

Establish governance frameworks to enable consistent and effective decision-making, regarding technology investments and strategic direction.

Development and Implementation

Oversee the development of our products and services, from ideation to deployment, ensuring they continue to exceed customer needs.

Business-to-IT Convergence

We work alongside the C-suite and senior leaders, to introduce dynamic IT services, so that as goals pivot due to market forces, IT can rapidly respond.

Customer and Market Focus

Through market analysis and customer engagement, we understand your needs and pain points, using this feedback to guide solution and service development.

Return on Software Investment

From optimising your technology stack to right-sizing your portfolio, we provide expert analysis to select the most appropriate software for new investments.

Technology White-boarding

More than just evangelists, our industry experts can re-imagine your entire IT environment, in the lead up to mergers, acquisitions, divestments or restructuring.

Future Proofing

We stay abreast of advancements in cloud, security, workspace and AI, adapting strategies and initiatives to ensure we remain relevant to our customers.

Trends in 2024

Organisations continue to evolve into complex, multi-faceted entities, which require a blend of technologies to meet the demands posed by an increasingly disparate and tech-savvy workforce

40%

Of CIO relationships

CEOs are becoming far more strategic, as they build their platforms for digital leadership, with nearly 40% saying they are responsible for digital transformation - Gartner

42%

Concerned over skills shortages

A lack of access to technical skills is one of the top 3 challenges holding back organisations ability to respond to change, underscoring the importance of a talent strategy - Accenture

61%

Expect disruption to accelerate

Further in 2024, with 76% of C-suite leaders who are generative AI as more of an opportunity than a threat, and more beneficial to revenue growth than costs reduction - Accenture

47%

Are not fully prepared

Nearly half say they are not fully prepared for the accelerating rate of change, with 72% approaching investments with more caution because of societal concerns about responsible use of AI - Accenture

78%

Struggle to get the balance right

Almost four out of five CIOs find it challenging to balance short-term operational needs with long-term strategic IT investments, often leading to suboptimal spending - Accenture

91%

of UK Business Leader

Experienced a significant software investment that failed to meet expectations, with the average UK enterprise spending £1.8 million on new software in the last 12 months. - Digi

55%

Of IT budgets in 2024

Will be allocated to security, with 80% of CIOs planning to increase cyber / information security spending. Considering the expansion in potential attack vectors, is a significant outlay - Gartner

66%

Of IT projects fail to deliver ROI

Based on the analysis of 50,000 projects, with 31% cancelled prior to completion. 17% of large IT projects went so badly, they threatened the very existence of the company - Standish and McKinsey

Leadership team

Stuart Sims

Head of Modern Workspace

Building an attractive cultural, technological and physical working environment, one that places the employee at the heart of the workspace strategy, can help attract the best talent and increase productivity. Unfortunately, achieving this panacea has been a perennial challenge, with forecasters and research groups giving a damning indictment on everything from employee engagement and innovation, to retention and customer satisfaction. As an evangelist for all things workspace, my role is to help customers unlock productivity short-cuts and support the adoption of modern collaboration and communication tools, so teams can achieve their goals

Richard Choi

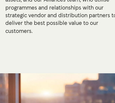
Head of Data Centre

Data centre environments typically follow strategic and tactical investments, growing organically in line with business needs, or rapidly evolving due to M&A. Many customers are operating with a mismatch of platforms that either do not integrate well, are duplicated across several functions, is nearing capacity, or is no longer fit for purpose. These risks can lead to higher operating costs, stalled projects and an increase in pressure on SLAs.Working closely with our colleagues in the Cloud and Security teams, my role is to ensure that every customer is operating on the best data centre foundations for its immediate and future needs.

Dominic Melly

Head of Cloud

Complexity is often cited as the one of the main reasons why companies experience failure with public cloud. Despite willingness to invest and quote often the strategy to support it, long-term ROI is often poor, negating the stated benefits. Even the most mature organisations – those with experience in public clouds - can struggle. As Ultima's Head of Cloud, my role involves helping customers accelerate or optimise their public cloud journey. This includes providing leadership around strategy, design, migration / transformation and on-going support needs, working closely with colleagues in our Security and Data Centre teams.



Chris Kirk

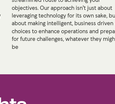
Head of Business Process Automation

One of the most precious commodities we have is time. Unfortunately, the reality is that people's time is often sunk into manual or mundane tasks that provide fixed value. Introducing automated systems that can perform repetitive tasks with minimal intervention can dramatically increase throughput, accuracy and consistency, with the time saved reallocated to higher value projects. As head of our BPA division, we're able to provide a flexible pool of digital labour to undertake much of the heavy lifting, breaking the association between work, the resource required to deliver it and the method of triggering, initiating or interacting with each process.

Neil Thompson

Head of Presales Architecture

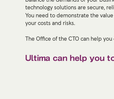
Since its inception in 2016, the Bid Office has been at the forefront of presales governance and best practice, supporting both Ultima and our customers across every conceivable sector, in sourcing the right IT solutions. As part of our as a centre of excellence, I'm tasked with ensuring we deliver a clear and consistent message when it comes our security, cloud, data centre, modern workspace and public sector offerings. I also provide cross-functional support to the leaders and specialists across the Office of the CTO, helping them conceptualise, design and develop their products and services, making sure they reflect the needs of our customers.



Danielle Connor

Head of Public Sector

There are over 600 departments, agencies and bodies that make up the UK public sector, with 47,000 customers and 5.7 million employees. Whether you're an IT leader in the NHS or work in higher education, we are able to simplify public sector IT sourcing through framework and purchasing support, expert advice, and via our long standing partnerships with leading vendors and suppliers. As head of our Public Sector team, I help connect Public Buying Organisations (PBOs) with the IT products and services they need, ensuring they leverage the most appropriate frameworks e.g. TePAS2, HTE and G-Cloud, and abide by the required purchasing regulations.



Tom Walker

Commercial Lead

As Commercial Lead, my team exists to support our customers and sales team with subject matter expertise. This includes our Sales Specialist team, who help organisations use technology to solve business challenges, as well as our Microsoft Licensing team, who assist customers in ensuring that the often significant spend in this space is optimised. I also look after Lifecycle Services, providing third party services to support existing assets, and our Alliances team, who utilise programmes and relationships with our strategic vendor and distribution partners to deliver the best possible value to our customers.

Stephen Webb

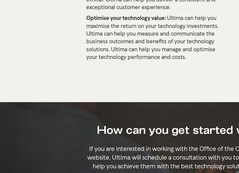
Head of Security

While security professionals are tasked with shoring up IT's defences, they are not necessarily looking at their organisation in the same way a hacker might. From the people responsible for preventing cyber-attacks, to the technology used to protect, mitigate and respond to incidents, I help customers understand their approach to security and how to prevent a wide range of threats. With over 25 years in the industry, I help make sense of the security ecosystem, assessing the maturity of their strategy and identify what technologies and controls they need to invest in, alongside the processes that will dictate how their business will react in the event of a breach.

Michael Minarik

Head of Business Consulting

Comprised of technical experts and business strategists, our Business Consulting division are able to speak your language, translating complex technological concepts into actionable business strategies. My role in leading the team is to offer a clear and efficient path to transforming your operation into a more effective, forward-looking enterprise that delivers real-world results, alongside a streamlined route to achieving your objectives. Our approach isn't just about leveraging technology for its own sake, but about making intelligent, business driven choices to enhance operations and prepare for future challenges, whatever they might be



Insights

Both our Bid and Public Sector divisions help customer sourcing teams deliver IT change by ensuring that formal tenders and expressions of interest are handled consistently and to the highest standard. Once complete, our APMP-certified bid managers will present our commercial proposition and answer any questions you may have. For public sector customers, we operate an additional set of governance and tender management processes, which are crucial in helping customers maintain adherence with specific procurement regulations. This includes applying for and maintaining compliance with frameworks like GCloud, Technology Products and Associated Services (TePAS2) and HealthTrust Europe (HTE), ensuring all bids meet the required regulatory and policy guidelines. Effective writing of proposals, bids and business plans is a key function of our Bid, Public Sector and wider CTO teams, with attention to detail and clarity being at the heart of our submissions. Helping translate complex technical solutions into clear, value-driven proposals, we focus on the benefits you can expect to derive from such an investment, alongside aspects such as implementation time lines and detailed cost break downs, so that you have all of the information to hand in order to make an informed decision.

Three decades of technology experience to IT Decision Maker benefit

As an IT Decision Maker, you face many challenges and opportunities in today's dynamic and competitive market. You need to balance the demands of your business stakeholders, your employees, and your customers. You need to ensure that your technology solutions are secure, reliable, and scalable. You need to keep up with the latest technology trends and innovations. You need to demonstrate the value and impact of your technology investments. And you need to do all this while managing your costs and risks.

The Office of the CTO can help you overcome these challenges and seize these opportunities.

Ultima can help you to:

Enhance your business resilience: Ultima can help you design and implement a technology strategy that enables your business to adapt and thrive in any situation. Ultima can help you leverage the power of cloud, security, workspace, and AI to improve your business agility, efficiency, and innovation.

Boost your reputational health: Ultima can help you build and maintain a positive and trusted reputation for your business. Ultima can help you ensure that your technology solutions are compliant, secure, and ethical. Ultima can help you deliver a consistent and exceptional customer experience.

Optimise your technology value: Ultima can help you maximise the return on your technology investments. Ultima can help you measure and communicate the business outcomes and benefits of your technology solutions. Ultima can help you manage and optimise your technology performance and costs.

Drive your productivity effectiveness: Ultima can help you empower your employees with the best technology solutions that enable them to work smarter, faster, and better. Ultima can help you create a modern and flexible workspace that supports collaboration, communication, and creativity.

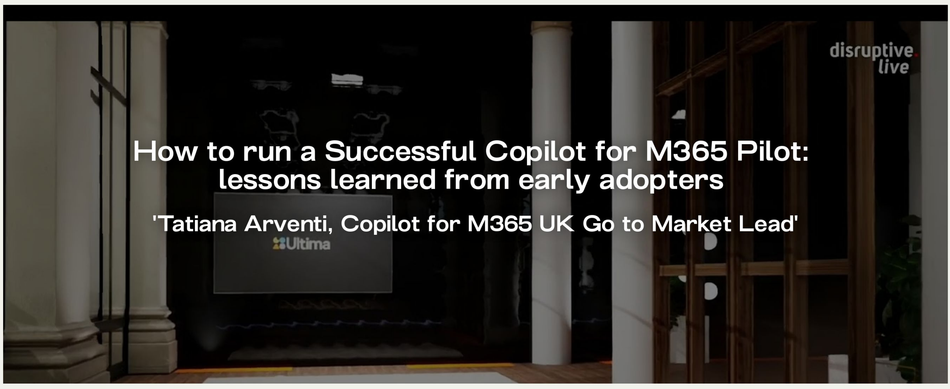
How can you get started with the Office of the CTO?

If you are interested in working with the Office of the CTO, you can contact Ultima by email, phone, or through its website. Ultima will schedule a consultation with you to discuss your business needs and goals, and how Ultima can help you achieve them with the best technology solutions. Ultima looks forward to partnering with you on your customer technology journey.

Connect with Matt

CTO, Ultima

Connect



How to run a Successful Copilot for M365 Pilot: lessons learned from early adopters

'Tatiana Arventi, Copilot for M365 UK Go to Market Lead'

The advent of AI in the workplace heralds a new chapter in productivity and innovation, whilst the introduction of Copilot for Microsoft 365 marks a significant step in this direction. Our learnings from customers adopting Copilot for M365 reveal what makes a successful Copilot for M365 pilot that leads to high daily active usage and tangible business outcomes.

Successful organisations have a change-oriented culture, invest in training and support, and integrate the benefits derived from Copilot into their strategic objectives. Even during the pilot stage, they report gains in productivity, collaboration, wellbeing, inclusivity, quality of work and time saving. Let's take a closer look:

Lesson 1

70%

Increase in productivity

Understand and articulate Copilot's potential (and limitations) Familiarise yourself and your key stakeholders with Copilot for Microsoft 365 and its alignment with the business challenges you are trying to solve for. Early adopters have reported a 70% increase in productivity and a 68% improvement in work quality (1). When rolling out Copilot it's essential to set up the right expectations on what it can and can't do (yet) to effectively address your specific business needs.

→ **Best Practice:** Deliver an Art of the Possible Workshop for your key stakeholders, include Line of Business Leads and IT Teams that can act as sponsors going forward. The more live demos on what Copilot can do, the better. **Get inspired here**

Lesson 2

30%

Reduction in time spent on repetitive tasks

Embrace Change and Encourage Adoption. Organisations that have successfully adopted Copilot for M365 share a common trait: a culture that embraces change. These organisations understand that technology is a powerful enabler of productivity and collaboration but the true power lies with people using it. By encouraging the adoption of AI tools like Copilot, they have seen significant improvements in efficiency. For instance, early adopters report a 25% increase in productivity and a 30% reduction in time spent on repetitive tasks (1). Insights from Microsoft's own adoption journey highlight the need for a user enablement framework and the creation of an AI council to guide the adoption process and the culture shift needed.

→ **Best Practice:** Keep everyone excited about the prospects of AI to transform the way we work, and make your organisational strategy clear i.e. What will AI solve for ? You can find **valuable resources here**

Lesson 3

40%

Increase in Copilot usage

Invest in Training and Support. One of the key factors for successful adoption is investing in training and end user support. Employees need to understand how to utilize the full potential of Copilot to enhance their work, to achieve that Copilot organisations are running launch days, prompt-a-thons, internal competitions, office hours, prompt excellence training etc. Additionally, our research shows that organisations providing comprehensive training see a 40% increase in Copilot usage and a 35% higher satisfaction rate among employees. Investing in training ensures that all team members can fully utilize Copilot and rip the benefits faster.

→ **Best Practice:** Align resources to lead the Adoption and Change Management activities for Copilot rollout. If you don't have the expertise in-house, use a Microsoft Partner to set your organisation up for success.

Lesson 4

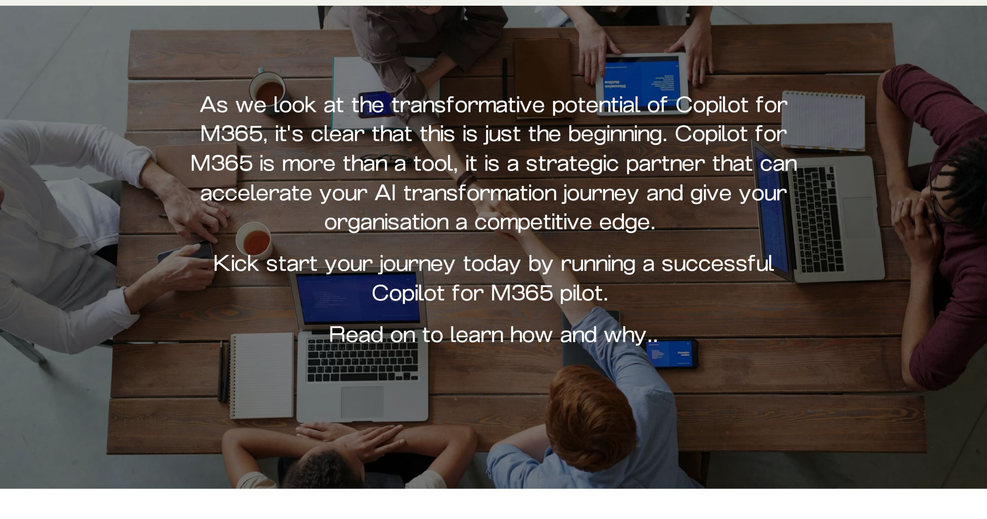
Address Security and Compliance Concerns. Early security and compliance are paramount when adopting any new technology. Microsoft's commitment to responsible AI practices ensures that Copilot meets the highest standards of data privacy, security, and compliance, including GDPR and EU Data Boundary. Additionally, Microsoft 365 Copilot inherits all data governance permissions from Microsoft Entra ID by respecting the access rights defined within the identity system. In the pilot stage, we see more and more organisations running technical readiness activities in parallel with end user enablement by establishing a trust agreement with pilot users, assessing and accepting the minimal risk of data exposure.

→ **Best Practice:** Maximise utilisation of available tools within your Microsoft 365 subscription i.e. Purview. If data oversharing concerns persist, use SharePoint Restricted Search (RSS) to limit Copilot's access to a curated set of SharePoint sites during the pilot phase.

Lesson 5

Measure Success and Expand Reach. Successful organisations set clear metrics to measure the impact of Copilot and use this data to make informed decisions on further end user training and license distribution. Productivity gains, capacity creation, quality improvements, and user satisfaction are few of the key metrics organisations use to measure success. We've also learned that value realisation is different on individual and functional level and users that had a peer to learn with are seeing faster time to value.

→ **Best Practice:** Make sure you have a significant cohort of users within same LOB function during the pilot. Once key scenarios within functions are identified in the pilot stage, use the momentum to enable others with Copilot.



As we look at the transformative potential of Copilot for M365, it's clear that this is just the beginning. Copilot for M365 is more than a tool, it is a strategic partner that can accelerate your AI transformation journey and give your organisation a competitive edge.

Kick start your journey today by running a successful Copilot for M365 pilot.

Read on to learn how and why..

How to Unlock the Full Potential of Microsoft 365 Copilot

A guide for users who want to leverage the power of generative AI to transform their work

Microsoft 365 Copilot is a revolutionary tool that uses generative AI to help you create high-quality content in minutes. Whether you need to create a document, a presentation, a blog post, or summarise your meetings, Copilot can assist you with smart suggestions and relevant examples. All you need to do is provide a prompt that describes what you want to create, and Copilot will generate the output for you.

But how can you make the most of this amazing technology? How can you craft effective prompts that elicit the best results from Copilot? How can you use Copilot to enhance your productivity, creativity, and knowledge? And how can you overcome the common challenges that might prevent you from adopting Copilot successfully?

In this article, we will answer these questions and share some expert tips for getting the most out of Microsoft 365 Copilot. We will also share some real-world statistics and personal examples that showcase how Copilot is transforming the workplace for users.

Best practices for crafting effective prompts, including do's and don'ts

One of the most important skills for using Copilot effectively is crafting good prompts. A prompt is a short text that describes what you want Copilot to generate for you. The quality of your prompt will directly affect the quality of the output that Copilot produces. A good prompt should be clear, specific, and relevant, while a bad prompt should be avoided, as it can lead to inaccurate, irrelevant, or inappropriate output.

✓

- Provide enough context and detail to help Copilot understand your goal and intent.
- Use natural language and proper grammar and punctuation.
- Use examples, keywords, or templates to guide Copilot's generation.
- Check the output for accuracy, relevance, and appropriateness, and provide feedback to Copilot if needed.

⊘

- Provide too much or too little information, as it can confuse or overwhelm Copilot.
- Use jargon, slang, abbreviations, or symbols that Copilot might not recognise or interpret correctly.
- Use vague, generic, or ambiguous terms that Copilot might interpret differently than you.
- Accept the output blindly, without verifying or editing it, as it might contain errors, inconsistencies, or biases.

Real-world examples illustrating the difference between basic and detailed prompts, and the impact on output quality.

Writing a document about the benefits of Microsoft 365 Copilot for business customers and partners.

Basic prompt

Write a document about the benefits of Microsoft 365 Copilot.

↓

Output

Copilot generates a generic and vague document that lists some common benefits of Microsoft 365 Copilot, such as saving time, improving quality, and enhancing creativity. The document does not address the specific needs or interests of business customers and partners, and does not provide any evidence or examples to support the claims.

Detailed prompt

Write a document about the benefits of Microsoft 365 Copilot for business customers and partners, focusing on how it can help them create high-quality content for various scenarios, such as marketing, sales, development, and research. Provide statistics, testimonials, and case studies to illustrate the benefits.

↓

Output

Copilot generates a specific and relevant document that addresses the needs and interests of business customers, and provides statistics, testimonials, and case studies to illustrate the benefits of Microsoft 365 Copilot. The document covers various scenarios where Copilot can help and explains how Copilot can help them achieve their goals and solve their challenges.

Writing a blog post about the latest features and updates of Microsoft 365 Copilot.

Basic prompt

Write a blog post about the latest features and updates of Microsoft 365 Copilot.

↓

Output

Copilot generates a bland and boring blog post that simply lists the latest features and updates of Microsoft 365 Copilot, without explaining what they are, how they work, or why they are useful. The blog post does not engage the readers or encourage them to try the new features and updates.

Detailed prompt

Write a blog post about the latest features and updates of Microsoft 365 Copilot, highlighting how they can help users create better content, faster and easier. Use a friendly and conversational tone, and include screenshots, examples, and tips to show the readers how to use the new features and updates.

↓

Output

Copilot generates a lively and engaging blog post that highlights how the latest features and updates of Microsoft 365 Copilot can help users create better content, faster and easier. The blog post uses a friendly and conversational tone, and includes screenshots, examples, and tips to show the readers how to use the new features and updates. The blog post also invites the readers to share their feedback and suggestions and encourages them to try the new features and updates.

The broader benefits of M365 Copilot, such as development assistance and acting as an intelligent, always-available resource, reducing the need for traditional search engines

Intelligent, always-available resource: Copilot can act as an intelligent, always-available resource, by providing you with answers, insights, and suggestions for any topic or question you might have. Copilot can help you research, study, and learn new things, by giving you relevant and reliable information, sources, and references. Copilot can help you explore, discover, and create new possibilities, by giving you inspiration, ideas, and alternatives. Copilot can also help you communicate, collaborate, and share your work, by giving you feedback, comments, and recommendations.

Reduced need for traditional search engines: Copilot can reduce the need for traditional search engines, by giving you direct and personalised access to the vast knowledge and information that is available on the web. Copilot can save you time and effort, by giving you the most relevant and useful results, without requiring you to type keywords, browse through pages, or filter through ads. Copilot can enhance your experience and satisfaction, by giving you the most accurate and appropriate results, without exposing you to irrelevant, outdated, or biased information.

Expert examples of how M365 Copilot enhances productivity

As a user of Microsoft 365 Copilot, I have personally experienced how Copilot enhances my productivity and helps me achieve more and do better every day. Here are some personal examples of how Copilot has helped me with my work:

1.

→ Using Copilot to quickly learn and share new information with the sales team

As a Workspace Specialist, I need to stay updated on the latest trends, technologies, and solutions that are relevant to our customers and teams. Copilot helps me quickly learn and share new information with my sales team, by providing me with concise and comprehensive summaries, reports, and presentations on any topic or question I might have. For example, when I wanted to learn more about the benefits of generative AI for business, I simply asked Copilot to write a summary for me, and Copilot generated a clear and informative summary that I could easily share with my sales team.

2.

→ Transforming Microsoft tutorial videos into sales enablement decks in under 30 minutes

As a Workspace Specialist, I need to provide my sales team with effective and engaging sales enablement materials that can help them sell solutions to their customers and prospects. Copilot helps me transform Microsoft tutorial videos into sales enablement decks in under 30 minutes, by providing me with relevant and attractive slides, bullet points, and images that capture the key messages and features of the solutions.

3.

→ Attending and summarising meetings you can't attend in person, boosting productivity and ensuring you stay informed

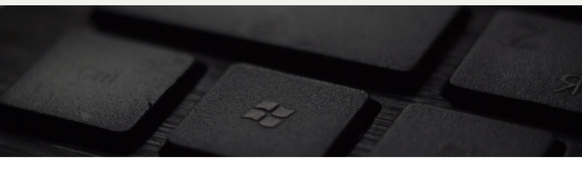
As a Workspace Specialist, I need to attend and participate in various meetings with my customers, prospects, partners, and colleagues. However, sometimes I can't attend all the meetings in person, due to scheduling conflicts, travel restrictions, or other reasons. Copilot helps me attend and summarise meetings I can't attend in person, by providing me with accurate and concise transcripts, notes, and action items that capture the main points and outcomes of the meetings.

Expert Reflection

"In my own experience, M365 Copilot has become an indispensable tool. Whether it's generating insightful reports, creating engaging presentations, or keeping up with meetings I couldn't attend, Copilot has consistently enhanced my productivity. It's more than just a tool; it's a catalyst for achieving more in less time.

By embracing Microsoft 365 Copilot, you're not just adopting a piece of technology; you're unlocking a world of possibilities for innovation, efficiency, and success in your business endeavours."

Volkan Bilgic, Workspace Solution Specialist, Ultima



Connect with Stuart

Head of Modern Workspace

Connect

Connect with Volkan

Workspace Solution Specialist

Connect

Connect with Ian

Senior Licencing Consulting

Connect

VMware Executive update:

What has happened in the Virtualisation space since Broadcom acquired VMware?

Broadcom changes

It is now approaching 6 months since Broadcom brought some controversial changes to their licence portfolio, following their acquisition of VMware for $69B last year. The most significant change was the announcement in December last year, when Broadcom confirmed the discontinuation of **Perpetual licenses** and **SnS support renewals**, and that moving forward they will exclusively offer **Subscription licences** for all of their portfolio.

This has sparked the most disruptive period for the Virtualisation market in close to a decade, pervasively affected any projects planned within customers datacentre infrastructures. With this in mind, we felt it was a good time to share our initial thoughts and experiences during this period.

What impacts have we found at Ultima?

In the past four months, our engagements with our VMware/Broadcom customer base have revealed concerns about the rapid license changes and their swift implementation. These changes have led to increased subscription costs for some customers, as they now include more features than customers have previously used.

Like many other software providers, VMware/Broadcom has shifted to a subscription model to remain competitive in the marketplace. Despite the associated costs, VMware continues to lead in datacentre virtualisation due to its extensive ecosystem.

Their vision is to guide customers on the hybrid cloud journey by integrating components of their flagship VMware Cloud Foundation (VCF) into other portfolio bundles.

This strategy aims to drive adoption and enable customers to modernise to Hybrid Cloud through VMware technologies. The newly restructured licensing bundles offer a range of choices to support small to large enterprises, featuring their market-leading vSphere offering and popular additional add-on features like vSAN, SRM, and VCDR.

Findings at Ultima are that although some customers who have concerns with the price adjustments, there is still a significant number of customers who are remaining with VMware technologies at least in the short-term. We have seen some customers who have upcoming hardware refreshes who have decided to shift to alternative Hypervisors or public cloud offerings, and some are using Hybrid Cloud as a viable alternative so the options are available, however they may not necessarily make immediate savings.

How can Ultima help you?

As an experienced Advanced Partner Ultima is regarded as one of the UK's leading VMware partners, having demonstrated repeatedly the ability to deliver on the highest levels of customer outcomes and expectations.

Specialising in hyperconverged infrastructure, mobility management, server and network virtualisation, data-centre virtualisation and cloud technologies, we design, implement and support a range of VMware solutions.

Our expertise includes integrating VMware products with a range of other technologies, providing tailored solutions based on real world experience, and our consultants are able to provide access to comprehensive product information, custom configurations and insight into product road-maps, helping ensure that our solutions achieve the ROI required by our customers.

Contact your Ultima Account Manager to learn more.

or email

Richard.Choi@ultima.com

"Preparing for Windows 10 End of Life: How not to get stung with avoidable charges"

Stuart Simms, Head of Modern Workspace, Ultima

"As the October 2025 end-of-life date for Windows 10 approaches, I thought I'd take a look into how many organisations missed the Windows 7 end of support date back in January of 2020 and what the impact of that was. Examples include: Microsoft M365 Copilot for productivity, Grammarly for writing assistance, Adobe Photoshop for design, help and GPT-3 for general language generation"

Did you know?

66% of organisations missed the Windows 7 end-of-life date in January 2020? The consequences were costly.

These organisations were forced to purchase Extended Security Updates (ESU) just to keep their devices secure and for some large enterprises this led to millions of pounds of additional cost that could have been avoided.

The main objective of my article is to prompt anyone that hasn't started planning their transition to Windows 11 to start ASAP to avoid a significant bill come October 2025. When Windows 10 reaches end of life, Microsoft will no longer provide security updates, leaving systems vulnerable to cyber threats and potentially leave you non-compliant with industry regulations. Extended Security Updates (ESU) are likely to be made available, the scope of which is up to Microsoft, with a suggested price of around £49 per device in the first year which then doubles to approximately £98 for the second year and then doubles again in year three to approximately £194.

Costs will vary depending on which license agreement you are on.

The main challenges customers face in getting ready to transition to Windows 11 include compatibility issues with existing hardware and software, the need for user training on the new interface, and assessing the potential negative impact on end user experience. Delaying the transition will expose organisations to unnecessary risks and make the process more time-consuming and costly.

Prepare for a smooth transition, with these three steps

1.

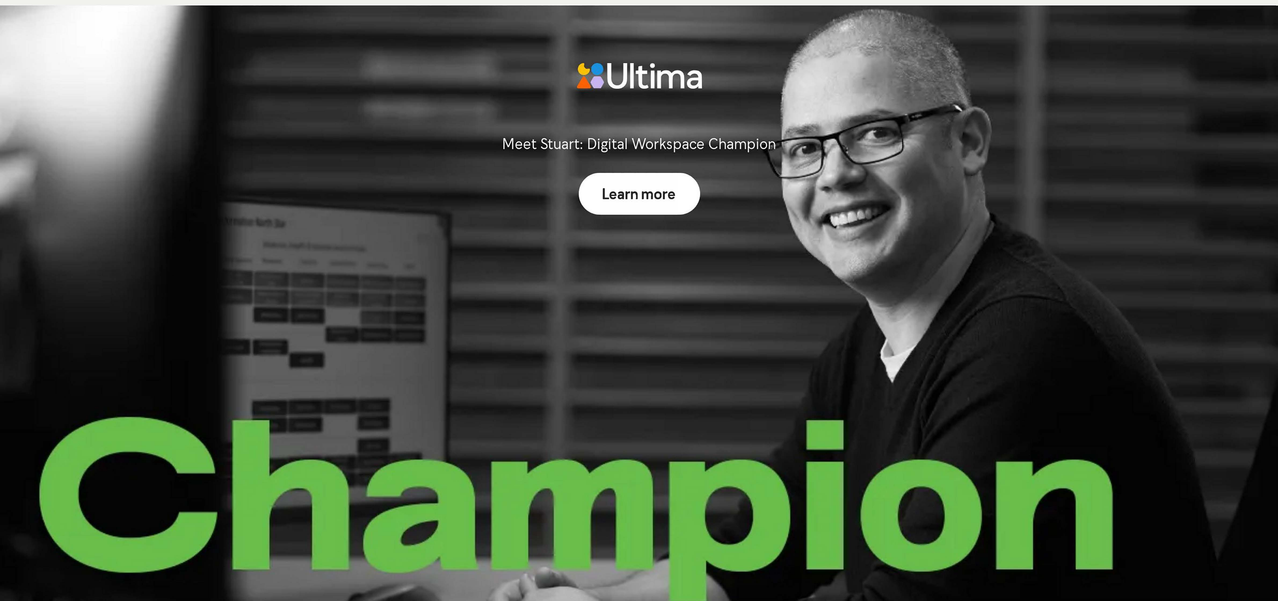
Assess and benchmark your current end user experience using a digital experience monitoring tool, this information combined with a hardware readiness assessment and app compatibly assessment will give you a clear plan for any device replacement or upgrade actions you need to take prior to the upgrade.

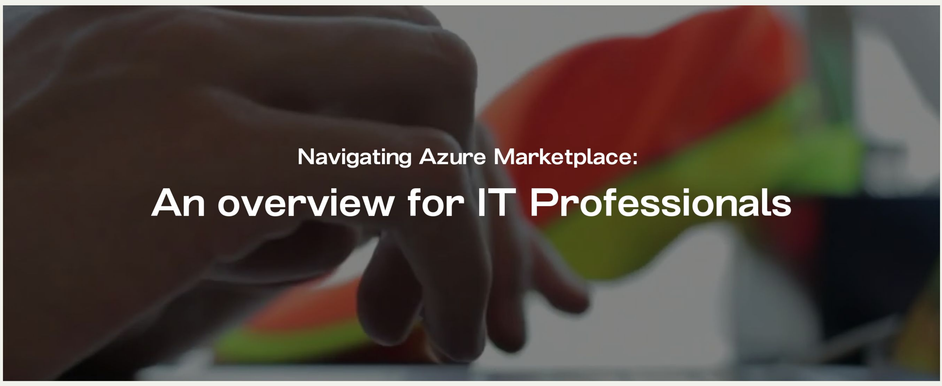
2.

Explore upgrade options considering in-place upgrades or taking the opportunity to transition to modern management with Microsoft Intune if you haven't done so already.

3.

Develop a detailed plan with timelines, budgets, and strategies to minimize disruption to operations and ensure a seamless transition.





Navigating Azure Marketplace:

An overview for IT Professionals

What is Azure Marketplace?

Azure Marketplace is a platform where you can find, try, buy, and deploy thousands of industry-leading apps and services that run on Azure. It's like a marketplace for cloud software and solutions that are certified and optimised to work seamlessly within the Microsoft Azure ecosystem. Whether you're an IT professional or a developer, Azure Marketplace offers a wide range of options to meet your needs.

As we want to give our customers a fast introduction to the benefits, Ultima are offering a **complimentary Licensing Optimisation Assessment** to demonstrate how you can benefit from Azure Marketplace and optimise any committed costs as part of a Microsoft agreement.

Benefits of Azure Marketplace

- **Procure at Pace:** Quickly find and deploy top-quality Azure cloud solutions.
- **Control and Choice:** Decide which solutions your employees can access, from an expansive ecosystem of pre-approved applications and services.
- **Cost Optimisation:** Leverage Ultima's expertise to draw down on existing MACC or EA agreements, ensuring every investment is maximised.

Ultima's Value Proposition

- **Simplified Procurement:** Ultima's expertise as Azure Marketplace natives simplifies the procurement process, allowing for fast, efficient deployment and management of cloud solutions.
- **Unlocked Savings:** With Ultima, gain access to deeper discounts and custom pricing through Private Offers, ensuring the best deals that contribute to your MACC agreements.
- **Exclusive Early Access:** As an MPO Preview Partner, Ultima provides early access to the latest Azure Marketplace innovations and offers.

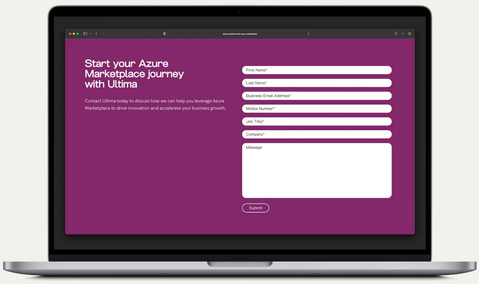
Ultima & Microsoft's Partnership

Our status as launch partner brings together the strength of Ultima as a Microsoft and multi-vendor services partner with the power of Microsoft's cloud marketplace, to deliver elastic cloud-first software solutions. With solutions from a select group of Independent Software Vendors (ISV's), this new mechanism combined with Ultima's trusted advisory skills, cost optimisation processes and customer first approach will drive better value, governance, and commercial terms as UK organisations look to modernise their application portfolios.

Is your business ready?

We're here to support you

Take our Azure Marketplace assessment now



Click here

Connect with Ryan

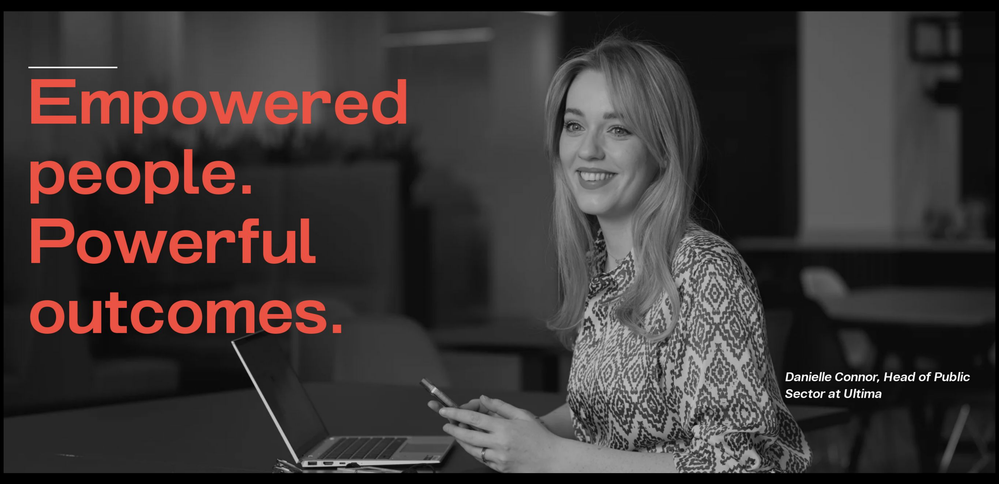
Microsoft Alliance Manager

Connect

Connect with Dom

Group Head of Cloud

Connect



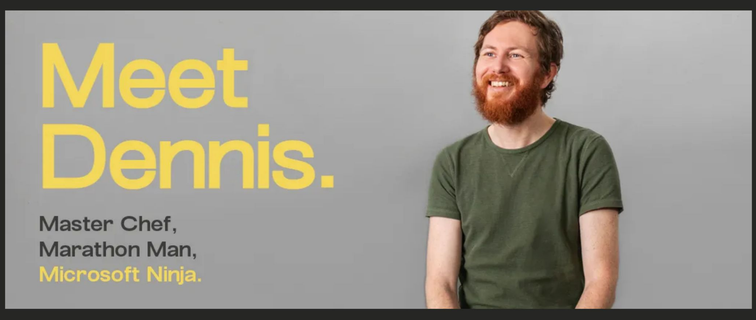
Danielle Connor, Head of Public Sector at Ultima

Ultima's differentiation is our people.

Our culture drives a commitment to not just providing customer satisfaction but exceeding expectations at every touchpoint.

As a global team it is our passion for excellence, expertise, market experience and global partnerships across cloud, security, digital workspace is powered by our in-house knowledge of AI and automation that provides organisations across private and public sectors with the right solutions and services at every point of their technology journey.

Some of our Experts:



Meet Dennis

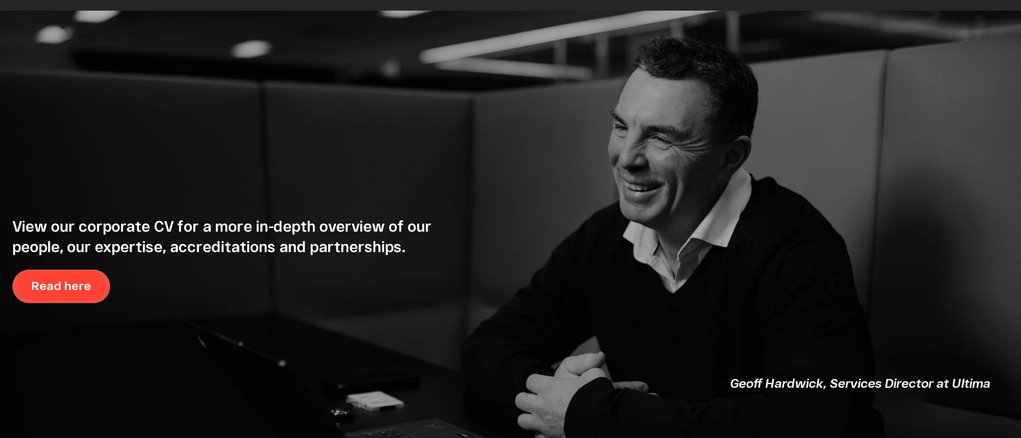
Microsoft Ninja

Click here

Meet Jay

Cyber Defender

Click here



View our corporate CV for a more in-depth overview of our people, our expertise, accreditations and partnerships.

Read here

Geoff Hardwick, Services Director at Ultima