

Astris TeamWare feature list

A BRIEF GUIDE TO ASTRIS FACILITIES

April 2020

Introduction

E-mail systems, such as Microsoft Outlook™, are designed as a tool for an individual, not a business or a group of people within an organization who share a common function or a common goal.

This individual-centric approach of Outlook is often forcing users to create workarounds to keep everyone informed of their actions or to gain information on the actions of others. This is usually done by lots of automatic Cc's and of secondary informational e-mails ("Done", "Let's not reply", etc.) to keep all group members up to date. One can easily imagine how much additional traffic in the form of secondary, tertiary and further e-mails this can generate. And such additional traffic tends to grow exponentially with the volume of action-requiring e-mails in an organization forcing the IT to find solutions to a problem much more complex than obvious.

Astris TeamWare Suite includes some add-ons that turn the Outlook/Exchange ecosystem into a group e-mail platform.

Office 365

Office 365 is Microsoft's cloud solution in its move away from the traditional software sales model and into the modern "Software as a Service" commercial policy. Several large businesses have already taken the step to join Office 365 (O365) for e-mail services.

O365 can service both standard Outlook users using Outlook for PC and also users without Outlook on their PC who use a web browser to access their e-mails through Outlook Web Access (OWA).

Astris offers some unique features to Outlook users. Most of them are already available for users using OWA, some will become available soon while the future of a few others is unclear as it depends on Microsoft's (private) plans for making OWA more extensible.

A summary of Astris features available per client type is shown in the next chapter.

Astris list of features

<i>Feature</i>	<i>Class</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Outlook Client</i>	<i>OWA</i>	<i>Generic smart-phone</i>
1. <i>Replied By</i>	Info Group	Shows any user(s) who have already replied to a particular e-mail.	✓	✓	-
2. <i>Sent By</i>	Info Group	Shows who is the sender of an e-mail when it is being sent by a departmental address.	✓	✓	-
3. <i>Change Sender</i>	Group	Changes the sender e-mail address for new e-mails to the user's departmental address. This can be overridden by user action.	✓	-	-
4. <i>Address Rewriting</i>	Group	Changes the sender e-mail address to the user's departmental address based on company policy (usually only for messages to 3 rd parties or vessels). Cannot be overridden by user.	✓	✓	✓
5. <i>Reference Numbers</i>	Group	Each message carries a unique ID on its Subject which is applied automatically. Allows the users to easily reference a message in documentation or discussions.	✓	✓	✓
6. <i>E-mail Delivery folders</i>	Fclt Perf	Folders such as "Company Inbox" and "Departmental Inbox" exist beneath the standard Inbox folder. E-mail traffic is spread in three (or more) folders instead of just the Inbox which offers several benefits to the users and to Outlook itself.	✓	✓	✓
7. <i>Period folders</i>	Perf	Moves older messages out of the Inbox and into "Period" folders as a kind of in-the-Inbox archiving drastically increasing performance with large volumes while still allowing searching and the operation of Search Folders.	✓	✓	✓
8. <i>MessageSafe Archiving</i>	Group Perf Cmpl	An instant e-mail archiving mechanism automatically filing all e-mail traffic into corporate "vaults". Messages are never deleted from MessageSafe (there exist exceptions for GDPR) and can be used for Records Management purposes. Messages are continuously updated with user actions such as tagging, replying and reading.	✓	✓	✓

<i>Feature</i>	<i>Class</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Outlook Client</i>	<i>OWA</i>	<i>Generic smart-phone</i>
9. <i>MessageSafe Search</i>	Group Perf Cmpl	<p>A powerful search integrated in Outlook allows users to find the messages they seek in a very dependable manner.</p> <p>A special permissions-mapping mechanism ensures that users can find historical and current departmental messages regardless of whether they ever received them in their mailbox.</p>	✓	F ¹	N ²
10. <i>GDPR Support</i>	Cmpl	<p>Users can assign messages to several PII classes according to corporate GDPR policy.</p> <p>Astris combines PII classes to Retention Policies on Exchange so such messages will be deleted on time from user mailboxes (it is enough that one user classifies the message as PII to have it removed from all mailboxes).</p> <p>PII messages held in MessageSafe are subject to a two-stage delete scheme. First, at expiration of Retention the message is hidden from all users. Second, a manual review process is provisioned to the DPO who will decide the final hard-deletion of eligible messages.</p>	✓	✓	N ¹
11. <i>Message Destroy</i>	Group	<p>Properly authorized users have a “Delete from All” facility to allow them to delete a message even when it has already been delivered to other users’ mailboxes.</p> <p>Certain users can be granted “immunity” from Destroy operations.</p>	✓	F	-
12. <i>Action audit</i>	Cmpl	<p>Two classes of audit details exist. Short Term Audit details when users sent, read, replied, tagged, filed a message. Permanent audit details who sent, read, replied and filed a message as well as all MessageSafe activities including search, preview and download.</p> <p>Audit details are only available to administrators through a special console.</p>	✓	✓	✓

<i>Feature</i>	<i>Class</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Outlook Client</i>	<i>OWA</i>	<i>Generic smart-phone</i>
<i>13. Auto-Classify</i>	Group	<p>Messages are classified with Project/Ship, Company, Division, Department using Outlook Color Categories and more.</p> <p>Classification is centrally controlled (no Outlook rules are involved).</p> <p>Users use it to quickly distinguish among messages.</p>	✓	✓	N ¹
<i>14. Message tagging from users</i>	Group	<p>A “Keywords Bar” allows users to easily tag messages with keywords of their choice.</p> <p>Outlook Color Categories are used to display the keywords picked by the user.</p> <p>Once a user tags a message, the assigned keywords become visible to all other users who have the same message in their mailbox.</p> <p>Tags are also useful for searching both in local mailboxes and inside MessageSafe.</p>	✓	✓	N ¹
<i>15. Message jotting</i>	Group	<p>A “sticky note” feature allows users to add short notes upon any e-mail message. For example, a manager may add work notes and a team member may add notes on how he carried out the instructions.</p>	✓	✓	-
<i>16. E-mail Templates</i>	Group Fclt	<p>Users may save frequently used e-mails as standard templates that can be quickly reused at will by themselves or their entire team. Granular security control and full audit safeguards the appropriate use of this feature.</p>	✓	-	-
<i>17. Well-known names for incoming messages</i>	Group Info	<p>The From field of incoming messages can be automatically adjusted to display a friendly well-known name rather than the “Display Name” chosen by the individual sending the e-mail.</p>	✓	✓	✓
<i>18. Work on Shared Mailboxes</i>	Group	<p>Shared mailboxes are an alternative that can be used to collect departmental e-mails thereby reducing traffic to personal mailboxes.</p> <p>Several features allow users to utilize shared mailboxes as standard personal mailboxes which is not possible in the default Microsoft setup.</p>	✓	N ³	N ³

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<i>19. Library Filing</i>	Fclt Group	Provides a corporate Library with several shared sets of folders to users where they can file e-mails with simple drag-and-drop and also documents of any type. Access to Library folders is controlled by permissions and all operations are fully audited.	✓		
<i>20. Filed By</i>	Info Group	Shows who has already filed a message, when and in which Library folder.	✓	✓	-

CLASS LEGEND

Info: Feature that provides additional information to the users

Group: Groupware feature or in other words an element facilitating close collaboration of users in departments or groups.

Perf: A feature enhancing the performance of Outlook for users receiving more than a few hundreds of e-mails per day.

Fclt: A feature facilitating the everyday work of the user.

Cmpl: A feature helping for compliance with Records Management/SOX/GDPR regulations.

FEATURE AVAILABILITY LEGEND

✓ : Feature is available.

F: Feature will be available at a future release.

F¹: Feature will be available soon. Currently MessageSafe Search is available as a standalone web application which can be executed with any web browser. After reading an e-mail with the built-in preview pane a user may choose to fully download an e-mail to either read its attachments or to reply or forward it. Currently the user needs Outlook to complete the download operation. At a next release the downloaded e-mail will be handled by OWA itself.

N¹: Requires the advanced e-mail client Nine[®] of 9Folders Inc which is available for Android and iPhone smartphones.

N²: MessageSafe Search is available as a standalone web application which can be executed with any web browser available on mobile devices.

N³: Users can read e-mails in shared mailboxes and reply to them but cannot easily distinguish unread messages as the default Outlook behavior is to have a single read operation mark a message as read for all users of a shared mailbox. This is taken care of in standard Outlook through the use of the Astris add-ins.

Summary

Astris TeamWare offers a rich set of features to enhance the everyday experience of Outlook users working in mail-intensive and collaborative environments.

The list presented above is not exhaustive and many more features exist which facilitate adaptation to many different business environments.

For more information please contact MetaDocs Ltd. at info@metadocs.eu or visit our site www.metadocs.eu