

# Office 365 Advanced Security and Compliance Solutions Case Study: Planet Technologies



## Company Profile:

Planet Technologies is a successful Microsoft partner with significant experience in cloud and datacenter services, cyber security, and mobile application development. They have a diverse practice, including public-sector engagements with many federal, state, and local government agencies.

Planet Technologies is a 6-time Federal Partner of the Year, 6-time State & Local Government Partner of the Year, and 5-time Windows Partner of the Year.

## Location:

Washington D.C. Metro Area  
Germantown, Maryland

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## Finding the right fit with Office 365 security solutions.

As organizations deploy tools that allow employees to create, share, and use data across a variety of platforms, they’re improving productivity, collaboration, and customer service, but that effort also increases risk if security is not managed effectively. Security threats to information systems and data increase rapidly, with new attacks and vulnerabilities affecting more enterprises and public-sector agencies every day.

Planet Technologies, a Microsoft partner based in the Washington DC metro area, has built a highly successful IT practice around Microsoft services and solutions. For more than twenty years, they’ve worked with a wide variety of enterprise clients. A large part of their practice focuses on federal, state, and local agencies, ranging from small cities all the way up to some of the largest federal agencies.

## Adding an advanced security solution for \$2 a seat.

With a long history of public-sector engagements, Planet Technologies understands that government agencies are always security conscious. While most federal agencies have relied upon dedicated security solutions that require expensive subscriptions and costly hardware, they’re finding that agencies are receptive to Microsoft security solutions as a fully capable, less costly alternative.

“These agencies realize they’re spending tens of thousands of dollars a year on security subscriptions, not to mention the hardware costs,” explained Jeff Fowler, Federal Senior Cloud Strategist for Planet Technologies. “If they can get Advanced Treat Protection (ATP) and other Office 365 security tools that provide the same functionality at a lower price point than what they are paying for their current solutions, they’re going to jump at the opportunity.”

Planet has a long-term contract with a large federal agency and has several staff on-site as an extension of the customer IT team. That high level of interaction drove conversations between the Planet team and the agency’s IT management. As both sides looked at the expenses associated with the agency’s existing threat protection measures, it became clear that Microsoft offered a more affordable solution to help address their needs.

As Fowler relates, “IT management at the federal customer wondered, ‘Why are we paying for our current bolt-on security product when we can get similar functionality from Microsoft built-in for just a couple more bucks per user?’ That made the decision to deploy ATP a no-brainer.”

Advanced Threat Protection (ATP) is one of the specific reasons the agency decided to switch. “Using ATP, we’ve enabled Safe Links across the entire tenant with about 1,000 users now, and Safe Attachments is currently being trialed,” Fowler said. “With Safe Attachments, they’re focusing on high-target users and executives who tend to be the target of those types of attacks.”

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## **Driving engagements with Office 365 Advanced Security Management.**

Planet Technologies sees more opportunities developing as customers learn how Office 365 Advanced Security Management gives them greater visibility and control over their Office 365 environments.

Planet Technologies envisions widespread application for Advanced Security Management in any organization that runs a Security Operations Center (SOC), with full-time security positions often staffed 24/7 to respond to any threats that develop. “Office 365 Advanced Security Management gives a SOC better insight and more control to secure their enterprise. It also helps them protect their end users from themselves, and they are very excited about that,” Fowler said. “This is a big opportunity for large agencies to replace existing tools that cost a ton of money. That’s a huge win for the customer.”

Similarly, Planet Technologies believes they’ll have additional opportunities to deepen their customer relationships as customers learn more about the specific benefits of Office 365 Secure Score, Advanced Threat Protection, Threat Intelligence, Customer Lockbox, and Advance Data Governance.

As an example, Fowler explains that Planet Technologies uses Secure Score to analyze customers’ Office 365 security and the score they have which is based on their regular activities and security settings. “We are very excited about Secure Score,” Fowler stated. “We use it to show customers where they stand today, then we show them how we can use different aspects of Office 365’s security suite to help them improve their scores and in turn their security position.”

## **Capitalizing on the new reality that everything revolves around security.**

As demand for new approaches to security has increased, Planet Technologies has recognized that there’s an opportunity to build their business around a security mindset. They now view security as an integrated part of their toolset.

“Historically, we might go into an Office 365 engagement with a customer and help them with their Active Directory (AD) migration, making sure they’re ready for AD replication and Azure AD. That’s a security engagement, but we didn’t always highlight the security aspect of it for our customers,” Fowler said. “We’re going to highlight that a lot more going forward.”

“Tools such as Threat Intelligence and Advanced Threat Protection are new tools in our toolbox, and any one of them can create a scenario where we can upsell Office 365 E5 and other Microsoft solutions to customers. That gives us more new customers and opportunities for additional customer engagements that lead to more profit for our business,” Fowler explained.

## **A security deep-dive offers business development opportunities.**

To leverage high levels of concern about security, Planet Technologies has recently launched a new Microsoft Cyber Security Workshop that provides an opportunity to show organizations how Office 365, Enterprise Mobility + Security, and Windows 10 can protect their data and end users.

Fowler explained that the Workshop provides customers with a one-on-one, five-day deep dive into security. “We go through scenarios and interviews to explore their security posture,” Fowler said. “The goal is to uncover the biggest threats and identify the risks the agency is facing today. Then we present a debrief of our findings and recommend Microsoft products that address their needs.”

## **Helping public-sector agencies get the most from tools they already own.**

Many clients don’t have the full picture of the security tools available with Office 365 and other Microsoft products they already own, and they often think they need to spend more money to solve security challenges. To address this, Planet developed youalreadyownit.com, a free web service that helps US Public Sector customers align their organizational goals with their Microsoft products. The service helps establish Planet Technologies as a Microsoft solutions expert and gives them added visibility among potential government customers.

## **Advice for other Microsoft partners.**

Planet Technologies believes that Office 365 security tools aren’t just beneficial for end users; they also give partners an opportunity to open or expand relationships with customers. As Fowler explains, “Security is one of the biggest problems organizations have today. A large percentage of organizations are compromised but don’t know it yet because it can take weeks or months to realize you’ve been compromised. Office 365 tools give you real-time insight about what’s happening in your organization, so you can reduce your exposure to risk and reduce incident response time in case of a breach. That’s an important advantage.”