

Microsoft fortifies security and brings AI to the masses at Ignite 2018 Monday, September 24, 2018 01:00:00 PM (GMT)

The company also demonstrated how AI, IoT and edge computing have become the foundation of the enterprise for a more secure, productive and intelligent workplace

ORLANDO, Fla., Sept. 24, 2018 /PRNewswire/ -- Monday at Ignite 2018, Microsoft Corp.'s annual IT event, the company underscored the need for increased IT security and released an array of security programs and products. Among them are Microsoft Secure Score, a dynamic report card that assesses Microsoft 365 customer environments and makes recommendations that can reduce breaches up to thirtyfold, and Microsoft Authenticator, which helps make secure sign-on easier for workers with features like password-free login. The company also advanced its commitment to democratize access to AI through a new AI for Humanitarian Action program aimed at harnessing the power of AI for disaster recovery, helping children, protecting refugees and displaced people, and promoting respect for human rights.

"In this era of the intelligent cloud and intelligent edge, businesses in every industry are looking for a trusted partner to help them transform," said Satya Nadella, CEO of Microsoft. "We are pushing the bounds in AI, edge computing and IoT, while providing end-to-end security to empower every organization to build its own digital capability and thrive in this new era."

Cybersecurity is the central challenge of the digital age

Every day organizations take precious time and resources away from their core business mission to defend against, and recover from, cyberattacks. They operate dozens of complex, disconnected tools, yet the gaps between those tools remain and threats get through. As the nature of the threats and the profile of the attackers continue to evolve, security teams struggle to keep up, and skilled expertise is scarce.

Microsoft is uniquely positioned to help, and today the company shared ways it is empowering IT to unlock the security capabilities of the intelligent cloud. To tip the scales in the cyberwar, Microsoft has a unique focus on three things: security operations at global scale that work not just for us but also for our customers, enterprise-class technology, and broad cybersecurity partnerships for a heterogeneous world.

Security operations at a global scale that work for our customers : At Microsoft, more than 3,500 full-time security professionals work with leading AI tools to analyze more than 6.5 trillion global signals each day. The company's global security infrastructure protects customers by securing datacenters, running a Cyber Defense Operations Center, hacking its own defenses (red-teaming), hunting down attackers, and blocking more than 5 billion distinct malware threats each month. Just recently, Microsoft's cloud-based machine learning models detected — with only 200 discrete targets — a stealthy and highly targeted attack aimed at small businesses across the United States. The company neutralized the threat, called Ursnif, in seconds. Also, Microsoft's Digital Crimes Unit, focused on advanced disruption and deterrence, has worked with global law enforcement agencies to take down 18 criminal bot-nets and rescue nearly 500 million devices from secret bot-net control.

Enterprise-class security technology: Microsoft is using the cloud to secure organizations broadly with new security features in its products that protect against a wide range of threats, secure the network and protect sensitive information:

- Nearly all data breaches start with compromised passwords. Today, Microsoft declared an end to the era of passwords, delivering **new support for passwordless login via the Microsoft Authenticator app** for the hundreds of thousands of Azure AD connected apps that businesses use every day. No company lets enterprises eliminate more passwords than Microsoft.
- **Microsoft Secure Score**, the only enterprise-class dynamic report card for cybersecurity, now includes EMS and Azure Security Center. By using Secure Score, organizations get assessments and recommendations that typically reduce their chance of a breach up to thirtyfold with steps like enforcing multifactor authentication for both administrators and end users and ensuring trusted access to the right applications. The Secure Score expansion also includes a broader set of controls from products like Microsoft Cloud App Security and Azure Active Directory to further harden

defenses and help IT understand and improve their organization's security position.

- **Microsoft Threat Protection**, announced today, is a comprehensive end-to-end solution that can help protect, detect and remediate cyberthreats, bringing together advanced threat protection and auto-remediation across email, PCs, identities and infrastructure into a single integrated experience in Microsoft 365. The service uses AI and human research to speed up investigations to eliminate threats faster, saving thousands of hours for overstretched security teams.
- Data breaches often stem from cybercriminals accessing data in use for computation, analysis and other functions. This deters many organizations from putting sensitive data into cloud workloads. Microsoft announced its public preview of **Azure confidential computing**, making Azure the first cloud service to provide a secure platform for protecting the confidentiality and integrity of data in use.

Cybersecurity partnerships in a heterogeneous world: It takes more than the right technology and operations to make the world as secure as possible. It takes work to strengthen the broad ecosystem, bring the entire tech sector together, and partner directly with governments and democratic institutions. In close partnership with others, Microsoft recently made significant advances in this work.

Microsoft is working with tech companies, policymakers and institutions critical to the democratic process on strategies to protect our midterm elections. The company's Defending Democracy program aims to protect political campaigns from hacking, increase security of the electoral process, defend against disinformation and bring greater transparency to political advertising online. Part of this program is the AccountGuard initiative, which provides state-of-the-art cybersecurity protection at no extra cost to all candidates and campaign offices at the federal, state and local level, and other organizations critical to the democratic process. In the first month, Microsoft has onboarded more than 30 organizations into AccountGuard, focusing initially on large national party operations, and the initiative now includes committees representing both major U.S. parties, as well as high-profile campaigns and think tanks. Microsoft is developing plans to extend the Defending Democracy program to democracies around the world.

Since the establishment of the Cybersecurity Tech Accord, an agreement to bring the entire technology sector together in defending all customers everywhere from malicious attacks by cybercriminal enterprises and nation-states, the group has nearly doubled in size. With 27 new organizations joining from around the globe since its launch, including Panasonic, Swisscom and Rockwell Automation, to name a few, the total number of signatories is now 61 companies, strengthening the broad ecosystem needed to keep the world secure.

In partnership with security teams across the company, the DCU has also combatted nation-state hackers. Using innovative legal approaches 12 times in two years, the DCU has shut down 84 fake websites often used in phishing attacks that were set up by a group known as Strontium, which is widely associated with the Russian government.

Around the world, the company is advocating for effective public policy by governments including stronger international rules, accountability through attribution, and the adoption of concepts like the Digital Geneva Convention.

Data and AI transform the intelligent enterprise

Furthering the company's commitment to democratizing access to AI and ensuring that the benefits are widely shared, the company today launched AI for Humanitarian Action, a new \$40-million, five-year program aimed at harnessing the power of AI to aid efforts such as disaster recovery, protecting children, refugees, and displaced people, and promoting respect for human rights. The company will do this by working deeply with select nongovernmental and humanitarian organizations through grants, investment of technology and shared expertise. This is the third program in Microsoft's AI for Good initiative, launched in July 2017.

Microsoft is also continuing to deliver AI-infused products and services that will be available to billions of people through the next generation of applications, experiences and personal assistants. Today, Microsoft is announcing new products and services to help enterprises get the most value from their data:

- **Azure Machine Learning** helps data scientists and developers build and train AI models faster, then easily deploy to the cloud or the edge. Significant new updates to the service include **automated machine learning** to identify the most efficient algorithms and optimize model performance, additional hardware-accelerated models for FPGAs, and a Python SDK that makes Azure Machine Learning services accessible from popular IDEs and notebooks.

- **SQL Server 2019 preview** redefines the relational database with new big data capabilities that enable users to take on any data project — from OLTP, Data Warehousing and Business Intelligence (BI) to AI and advanced analytics. With these enhancements, SQL Server becomes a hub for data insights that breaks down silos between database management systems, providing faster insights without moving or copying data. Spark and Hadoop Distributed File System (HDFS), now built-in, enable data scientists to ingest, store and analyze vast amounts of data. New connectors enable the query of other databases like Oracle, Teradata and MongoDB directly from SQL Server, removing barriers to insights everywhere.
- **Azure SQL DB hyper scale** is a new, highly scalable service tier that adapts to your workload's needs, auto-scaling up to 100 TB per database. Available Oct. 1, it provides a high-performance storage system that expands the potential for app growth without being limited by storage size.
- **Azure Data Explorer public preview** accelerates discovery and insight from large volumes of event data. It enables users to interactively explore and analyze the data in near real time to quickly spot patterns and anomalies, determine the root causes, diagnose issues, and analyze performance for improved business insights and outcomes. Azure Data Explorer is a lightning-fast indexing and querying service optimized for ad-hoc data exploration and analytics of log and telemetry data from websites, applications and IoT devices.
- **Updates to Azure Cosmos DB Multi-master** enable customers to easily build their mission-critical, globally distributed apps. **Multi-master** support in Azure Cosmos DB provides high levels of availability and single-digit millisecond latency, with built-in flexible conflict resolution support to significantly simplify development of globally distributed applications. The **Cassandra API** expands Cosmos DB's value prop as a multimodel, multi-API database, giving customers the flexibility to use the data model and API of their choice. And **Reserved Capacity** reduces barriers to entry, enabling customers to get up to 65 percent off the cost of their Cosmos DB usage.

Microsoft also unveiled new AI experiences in Microsoft 365 that make it easier for people to find information, create content, analyze data and collaborate with others:

- Microsoft introduced a new cohesive search capability, **Microsoft Search**, that makes it easier to find a variety of documents and data from both inside and outside the organization without leaving the flow of work. The search box is in a consistent, prominent place throughout Microsoft 365 apps so that search is always one click away. Under the hood, Microsoft is pulling together the power of the Microsoft Graph and AI technology from Bing to deliver experiences that are more relevant to what people are working on. Customers can preview the [Microsoft Search capability](#) on Sept. 24 as it rolls out on Bing.com and to Office.com, including app start pages and in the SharePoint mobile app, with many more endpoints to come including in Microsoft Edge, Windows and Office.
- **Ideas** in Office help people tap into the power of AI with one click of a mouse to launch intelligent recommendations in Office applications. Rolling out first for Excel and PowerPoint, the Ideas engine simplifies the user experience and helps people save time performing everyday tasks. Simply click the lightning bolt icon in Excel or PowerPoint to launch the Ideas pane, which provides actionable, app-specific suggestions for designs, layouts and images customized to what the user is working on.
- Today, **new intelligent enhancements in Excel** are generally available, giving users the ability to turn data into insights. In addition, **Insert Data from Picture**, a new feature that's available in public preview on Android, allows users to take a picture of a table from their phones and quickly convert those pictures into an Excel file that can be edited, analyzed and shared. Enhancements also include major improvements to the performance of existing Excel functionality. For instance, lookup-type functions will now take seconds instead of minutes.
- With the ability to **connect Office 365 and LinkedIn accounts**, users can send emails and share documents with LinkedIn first-degree connections directly from Outlook, Word, Excel and PowerPoint. Microsoft also announced that, later this year, customers will be able to see LinkedIn information about the people they're meeting with directly in meeting invites.
- New AI-powered capabilities in Microsoft Teams are now generally available, showcasing Microsoft's ongoing commitment to transform business meetings. **Background blur** uses facial detection to blur your background during video meetings, and **meeting recording** provides speech-to-text transcription generating a searchable transcript and automatically applying captions to the recording. And with generally availability of the new live event capabilities beginning to roll out worldwide in Microsoft 365 later this year, customers will be able to create and stream live and on-demand events in Teams, Microsoft Stream and Yammer.
- Microsoft is bringing customizable Cortana experiences and skills with the new **Cortana Skills Kit for Enterprise**. The end-to-end solution allows enterprises to build custom skills and agents, test

them with users, and fully manage deployment to their organization. Developed with the Microsoft Bot Framework and Azure Cognitive Services Language Understanding service, the platform will help enterprises effectively use Cortana to improve workforce productivity. This is currently available by invite only and more broadly in the near future where companies and developers will be able to request an invitation.

Capturing value from IoT and edge computing

Computing is becoming more ubiquitous and simultaneously more distributed across the edge — connected devices, endpoints and geographies. With the power of AI, these devices can predict, learn, speak and more. This is all driving the next wave of innovation at the intelligent cloud and intelligent edge. Microsoft is delivering powerful IoT and edge solutions that unlock new opportunities for customers to bring cloud intelligence to new scenarios and to areas where connectivity is unreliable:

- **Azure Digital Twins**, announced today, is a new offering in our IoT platform that enables customers and partners to create a comprehensive digital model of any physical environment. As the world enters the next wave of innovation in IoT where the connected objects such as buildings, equipment or factory floors need to be understood in the context of their environments, Azure Digital Twins provides a complete picture of the relationships and processes that connect people, places and devices. Azure Digital Twins leverages the full power of the Intelligent Cloud and Intelligent Edge to provide a foundation for partners to build custom digital solutions that stay up-to-date with the physical world, as well as use advanced analytics to understand the past and predict future states for scenarios such as predictive maintenance, energy management and more.
- **Azure Sphere**, the first holistic solution designed to secure and power IoT devices at the intelligent edge, is now available in public preview. Azure Sphere is designed to secure connected microcontrollers — of which there are 9 billion shipping every year — from the silicon to the cloud. [Development kits](#) are now universally available.
- With **Azure Data Box Edge** public preview, now available, Microsoft is adding even more products to the Azure Data Box family to help customers analyze, process, and transform data before uploading it to the cloud. Azure Data Box Edge is a physical network appliance, shipped by Microsoft, that sends data in and out of Azure with AI-enabled edge capabilities. It uses advanced FPGA hardware natively integrated into the appliance to run machine learning algorithms efficiently at the edge. The size and portability enables customers to run Azure Data Box Edge as close to users, applications and data as needed.

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