



MCA
CONNECT

A GUIDE

DYNAMICS 365 FINANCE & OPERATIONS VS. DYNAMICS AX

CRAIG O'CONNOR
Director of Business Solutions

WELCOME!

If you are considering upgrading from Dynamics AX (AX) to Dynamics 365 for Finance and Operations (D365), you are in the right place! We put together this short guide to give you a recap of the differences you can expect, and why you may want to consider upgrading your ERP system from an on-premise or hosted deployment of AX to the fully cloud-based D365.

Note that one of the great features of D365 is that the software is continually being improved to add more features, more security and more integrations. As such, this guide is a high-level overview. If you have specific requirements that are important to your organization that you don't see listed, please reach out to us.

The Cloud and SaaS (software-as-a-service) is the future of software. Gartner, Nucleus and others predict exponential growth of SaaS ERP solutions. So, the question really isn't if you should move to the cloud, it's when is the right time for your organization?

Microsoft is a leader in Nucleus Research's 2018 ERP Value Matrix. You can directly upgrade to D365 from prior versions of AX, including:

- AX 2009
- AX 2012
- AX 2012 R2
- AX 2012 R3

Obviously, the older your software is, the more you'll notice a difference. You may be surprised to see just how much has been added over the years, thanks to Microsoft's heavy investments in research and development.

In October 2018, mainstream support ended for releases prior to AX 2012 R3 with extended support ending in October 2019. See [this](#) article for further information on Microsoft support for AX 2009 and AX 2012.

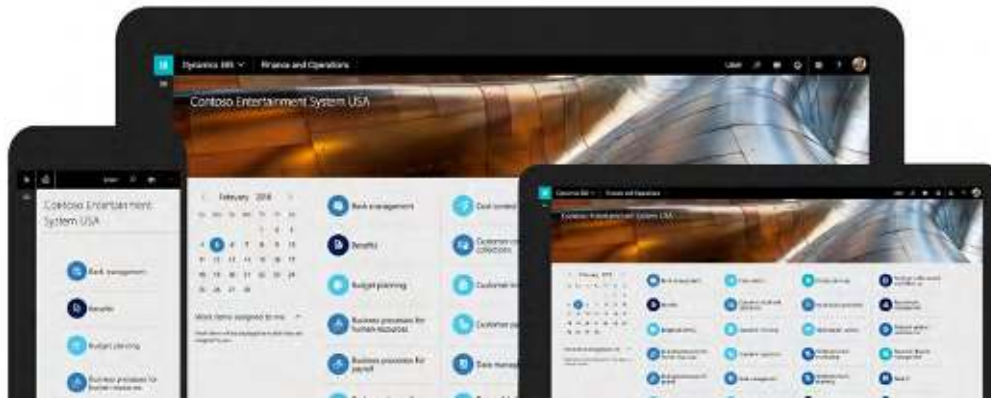
While you may view this as an upgrade, moving to D365 feels more like an implementation of a new system. While much of the core system is the same, there are many new features and functions and the user interface is now browser based. Users will be comfortable with D365 but at the same time will feel like they have a new system. In addition to a new licensing model, application support and maintenance is now managed via Microsoft Lifecycle Services in the cloud. If you have questions about the upgrade process, would like a custom demo, or would like us to run a total cost of ownership (TCO) analysis, please contact our team at:

Solutions@MCAConnect.com
1-866-662-0669

CONTENTS

USABILITY	3
LIFECYCLE SERVICES	4
DATA SECURITY	5
FUNCTIONALITY	6
COLLABORATION	7
ANALYTICS	8
COST	9
SUMMARY	10

1 USABILITY



The first thing you'll notice when you login to D365 is how clean, modern and intuitive it is. The entire application has been re-designed to improve the user experience, whether you're in the office or working on a mobile device. As in AX, D365 forms and views can be associated with user security roles and users can further refine their favorite views and screens to meet their individual needs.

2 LIFECYCLE SERVICES

Lifecycle Services (LCS) is a Microsoft Azure-based collaboration portal that provides a unifying, collaborative environment along with a set of regularly updated services that help you manage the application lifecycle of your implementations. While Microsoft launched LCS for later releases of AX2012, LCS was designed for the cloud. If you do have LCS today, you will find that D365 takes LCS to another level.

In AX, administrators are responsible for regularly applying AX application updates, upgrading databases and server operating systems. Because upgrading all the layers of hardware and software, it's common for organizations to fall behind, or choose to stay in a prior version.

D365 compels you to stay current with the latest lifecycle release. Using LCS, you are automatically granted new features with updates that are rolled out on a routine basis. The D365 license includes sandbox and testing environments, so you (or us as your Microsoft partner) can test any integrations or custom code before deploying the changes in a production environment.

Lifecycle Services has a built-in Business Process Modeler and telemetry that allows you to immediately see the downstream impact of changes during the design phase of the project. The Task Recorder feature can be used to easily author training materials for your end users and functions as an automated regression testing tool to validate new releases.

3 DATA SECURITY

With AX, your Dynamics team is responsible for the system maintenance, backup, recovery, business continuity and disaster planning.

D365 IS BUILT FOR HIGH AVAILABILITY:

- Network load balancing
- Backup servers
- SQL Server Failover Cluster / Always On
- Microsoft managed environments with end-to-end authentication

The guaranteed uptime for D365 is 99.9%. Planned downtime occurs monthly and can be scheduled to align with your business activities. As Microsoft continues to improve their process, they have a stated goal of zero downtime for maintenance.

D365 production environments are configured with Azure disaster recovery support that includes Azure SQL active-geo replication for primary databases, with a Recovery Point Estimate of less than 5 seconds. When you consider recovery of the entire environment, D365 has an overall Recovery Time Objective (RTO) of 10 hours and a Recovery Point Objective of 5 minutes. You can read more [here](#).

Microsoft has invested over \$15 Billion Dollars in building out their data centers and spends \$1B annually on cyber-security measures.

4 FUNCTIONALITY

Microsoft estimates that up to 40% of AX custom code can be eliminated by using the new functionality built into D365.

KEY AREAS THAT RECEIVED MAJOR ENHANCEMENTS INCLUDE:

- Inventory management and demand forecasting
- Multisite advanced warehouse management
- Order promising
- Distribution planning
- Transportation management
- Product change management
- Master data management
- Human resources
- Retail / point-of-sale

In addition, there are hundreds of additional applications available for Dynamics 365 through [Microsoft AppSource](#).



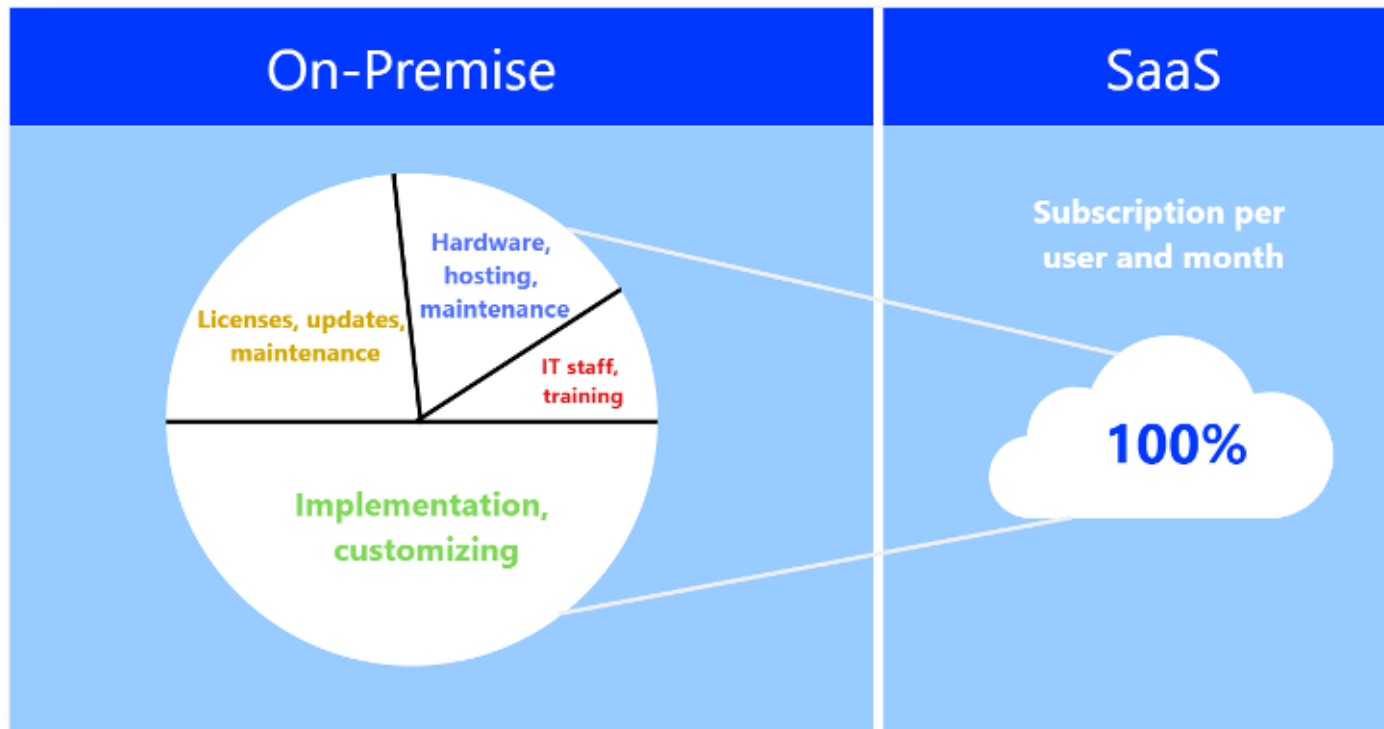
5 COLLABORATION

The screenshot shows the Dynamics 365 Microsoft AppSource interface. At the top, it says "Dynamics 365" and "Intelligent business applications in the cloud". Below this is a dark blue bar with "Microsoft AppSource". The main content area is divided into three columns. The left column features the "Office 365" logo. The middle column is titled "Microsoft Dynamics 365" and contains several application tiles: "Sales", "Customer Service", "Operations", "Field Service", "Project Service Automation", "Marketing by Adobe", and "Customer Insights". The right column lists "Power BI", "Cortana Intelligence", and "Azure IoT". At the bottom, a dark blue bar contains the text "Common application platform: PowerApps, Microsoft Flow, Common Data Service".

Dynamics 365 for Finance and Operations is one module within Dynamics 365 that leverages a Common Data Model to create one unified platform, bringing a new level of collaboration capabilities to the entire organization.

7 COST

To have an accurate comparison of licensing costs requires understanding your organizational situation and needs. But one thing to consider when moving to D365 is that many of the hardware, software, system administration and consulting costs are built into the licensing.



8 SUMMARY

The future of business is creating digital transformation, creating customized user experiences, improving productivity and accelerating the speed of business. Digital transformation depends on the cloud to enable:

- Omni-channel sales, service and support
- Internet of Things (IoT) connected devices
- Integrated applications (reduction of data silos)
- Big data, predictive analytics, machine learning
- Data lake access and storage

D365 is built for the cloud. MCA Connect can help you decide when and how to migrate your business to the cloud.

MCA Connect has long been recognized as a leading ERP partner by Microsoft, winning multiple awards and consistently delivering innovative solutions that save companies millions of dollars. One of the key advantages to working with MCA Connect for ERP implementations is that we have a tight industry focus, but a wide set of service offerings. Our deep knowledge of both the product and the industry enables us to find hidden opportunities only made possible through things like IoT devices, predictive analytics, and lean manufacturing.

[CONTACT US FOR A D365 READINESS ASSESSMENT!](#)

