

A Cloud Essentials Quick-Start Guide to:

Microsoft Purview Compliance Manager

A Cloud Essentials eBook 2023

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Welcome

As with so many things in today's technology landscape, compliance is a journey, not a destination. It takes constant vigilance (and frequent action) to stay abreast of shifting regulations, industry standards and best practices - particularly if you're in a highly regulated or rapidly evolving field.

Luckily for compliance professionals, Microsoft 365 provides an astoundingly effective - and yet frequently overlooked - solution to this ongoing challenge. It's (creatively) called Compliance Manager and falls under the Microsoft Purview suite of tools.

This quick-start guide introduces Compliance Manager's key features and benefits, and offers a few tips on how to start fine tuning your compliance engine with this not-so-secret (but oh-so-powerful) compliance tool.

Client barriers to getting started with Microsoft Purview.

"We don't know where to start..."

"We're unsure about Purview capabilities and how it fits with our existing toolkit"

Read on for practical advice and guidance for overcoming these hurdles.















About the authors



Nivasha Sanilal Compliance Lead

Nivasha is a legal and compliance professional with a track record in the financial services industry. She is a member of the Compliance Institute South Africa (CISA) and is a certified Compliance Practitioner.

Nivasha has practical experience of end-to-end risk management, regulatory change management, compliance monitoring and reporting.

She is able to engage with business and technical teams to discuss risk management, bridge the gap that can exist between teams, build understanding and drive informed decision-making.



Johann van Schalkwyk Microsoft 365 Technical Lead

Johann is an MCP, MCSE and MCSA certified professional with Microsoft Preferred Partner Solutions Expert accreditation.

He's the Cloud Essentials technical guru when it comes to security, governance, migration and compliance solutions, and his 17 years of experience spans Microsoft and non-Microsoft technologies.

Johann is able to use his know-how to bring the technology to life, easily conversing with both technical and business teams to solve our clients' cloud technology challenges.











What is Compliance Manager?

Compliance Manager is designed to be the risk and compliance team's focal point, helping them assess the implementation of controls and ensure Microsoft's security and compliance technology is meaningfully deployed. It functions as a control tower, playbook and progress tracker, all rolled into one, convenient platform.

Compliance Manager's clearly laid-out interfaces offer access to all the Microsoft Purview levers that can be pulled to customise and enhance compliance and governance. It includes templates, assessments and workflows to map and scale up compliance efforts, and even a scorecard that benchmarks where you are, how far you've come, and where you could (and should) be heading next (more on that in a bit).

Leveraged to its full potential, Compliance Manager is a force to be reckoned with, adding value at every step of your compliance journey. From taking inventory of your data protection risks to managing the complexities of implementing controls, staying current with regulations and certifications, and reporting to the Board, regulators or internal and external auditors; this powerhouse really does do it all.

Adoption hurdles

Compliance Manager is bundled into all of the most popular Microsoft 365 business licence packages. So why is it still one of the cloud platform's most underused tools?

The problem may lie in the fact that Compliance Manager is targeted at Compliance Professionals, but gatekept by IT, who may not fully appreciate its potential. In fact, IT may be downright reticent to grant compliance teams access permissions to Compliance Manager, under the mistaken impression that it provides direct access to their painstakingly crafted technology controls.

In reality, Compliance Manager is more of a window into compliance than a key to the city. Configured correctly, it enables compliance professionals to tweak front-end settings and toggle established controls to get the results they need without changing any of the underlying technology.

Pro tip:

Compliance Manager uses role-based access control, providing different levels of access (and locking/unlocking various actions) depending on a user's role assignment and role type. Getting access to the features you need may require a conversation with your IT department to figure out exactly what role assignment is necessary.

















A peek under the hood

Compliance Manager's capabilities centre on four key elements: **controls**, **assessments**, **regulations**, and **improvement actions**.

Together, these provide all the functionality necessary for compliance professionals to:

- Assess and take inventory of the organisation's people, process and technology controls
- Collaborate on and manage the complexities of control implementation
- Stay up to date on regulations and standards
- Monitor and report on compliance progress to auditors

Let's take a closer look.







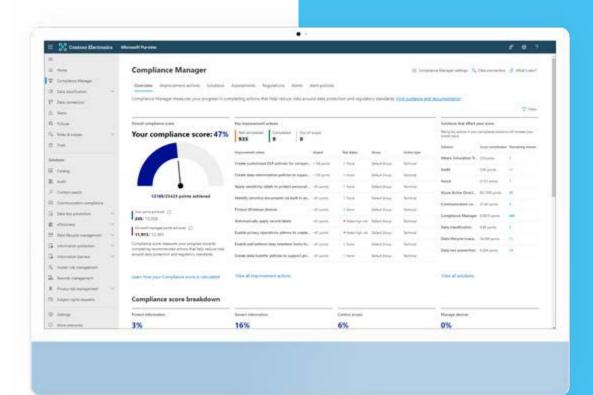












Controls

A peek under the hood

Compliance Manager effectively tracks all the compliance controls and settings in place within your Microsoft 365 environment (including Microsoft-managed, self-managed and co-managed controls). It uses this information to benchmark your current compliance maturity (or risk level), and recommend strategic actions/additional controls to improve your compliance posture.

New actions/controls reflect on the dashboard within 24hours of their implementation, providing near-real-time feedback on your organisation's compliance progress.

Each assessment has its own Controls view. Pictured is a screenshot of the controls in the Data Protection Baseline Assessment.







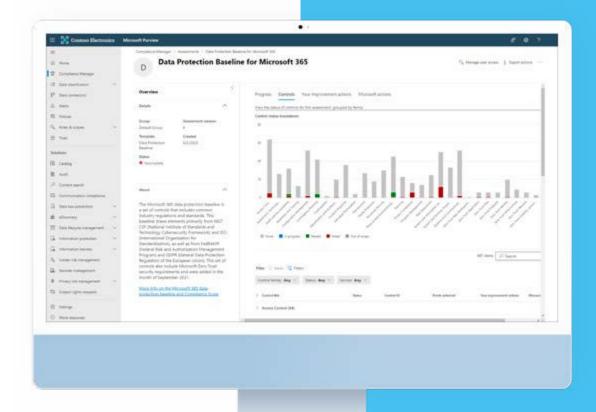












Assessments

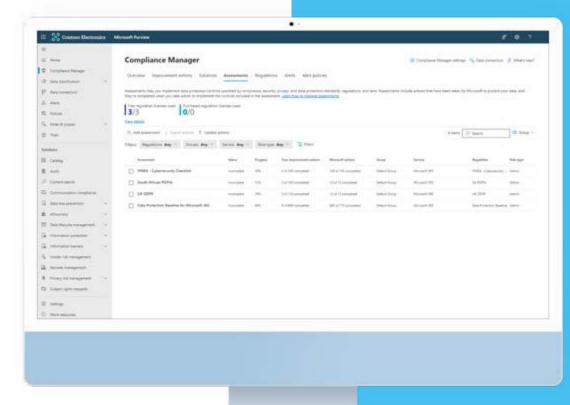
A peek under the hood

Microsoft defines Compliance Manager's assessments as "a grouping of controls from a specific regulation, standard or policy". We like to think of them more along the lines of a to-do list that, once completed, will leave your environment compliant with whichever regulation/policy the assessment targets.

Each assessment includes a set of in-scope services (Microsoft services applicable to the assessment), Microsoft-managed controls, self-managed controls, shared controls, and an assessment score showing your current progress.

Assessments are typically assigned to groups that can be configured to your organisational structure and/or logic. (Popular groups include audit year, region, solution and team.) The Compliance Manager dashboard can then be filtered to view your compliance score by one or more groups at a time, giving you instant insight into where you fall on those specific compliance metrics.





















Regulations

A peek under the hood

Microsoft doesn't leave you hanging when it comes to the creation of assessments, either. It has over 350 templates available, covering all the most common regulations, standards, and policies to get you up and "assessing" in the blink of an eye.

?

Did you know?

At Cloud Essentials, we earned our stripes as a Microsoft Compliance Partner by creating the mapping for Microsoft's South Africa data privacy template Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA). It's safe to say we know a thing or two about the process and are well-equipped to help you create your own custom templates/assessments, too.







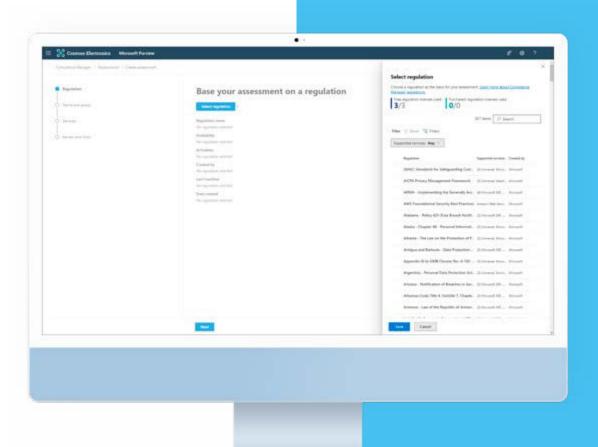












Improvement Actions

A peek under the hood

Improvement actions are Compliance Manager's way of helping you keep your compliance journey moving. They're basically a continuously updated list of suggested "next steps" to improve your compliance maturity based on your existing posture.

Each improvement action is assigned points according to its potential impact on your overall compliance score. They also offer guidance on alignment with data protection regulations and standards. This makes it infinitely easier to prioritise controls with the greatest impact in the compliance areas most important to you, giving you more compliance bang for a significantly less-laborious buck.





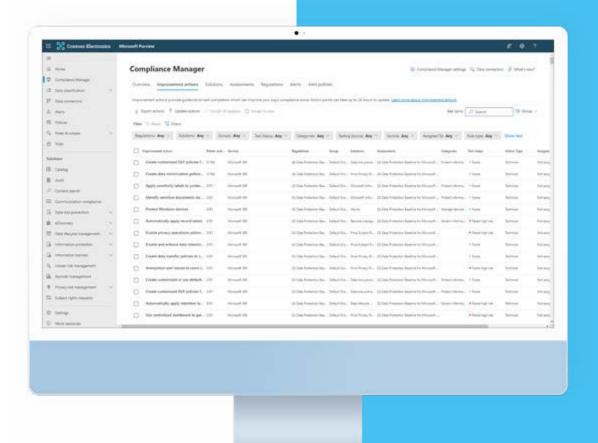














Keeping Score

All of Compliance Manager's capabilities are powerful in their own right, but our personal favourite has to be the Compliance Score.

This little metric is one of the first things you'll see when exploring Compliance Manager's dashboards, and you may be tempted to dismiss it as some kind of gamification gimmick. Trust us when we say: this is not a feature to ignore. Rather, it's one of the best non-IT-focussed compliance tools we've ever seen – especially when it comes to motivating risk and compliance teams.

What is Compliance Score, and what does it do?

The Compliance Score is essentially a measurement of your organisation's current level of compliance with basic standards and privacy regulations and, by extension, your compliance maturity. It's calculated by assigning points (weighted by risk level) for the completion of improvement actions that align your compliance posture with applicable regulations, standards or policies.

The higher your Compliance Score, the further along you are in your compliance journey. But Compliance Manager's scoring dashboard offers much more than just a gauge of current progress.

By offering a breakdown of score by compliance area, the dashboard makes it easy to see exactly where your controls are falling short. Better yet, it provides a list of suggested improvement actions for each area. These can be prioritised according to their potential impact on your overall Compliance Score (i.e., risk reduction potential), making it much easier to focus resources on areas with the highest risk-reducing impact.

Your compliance score: 72%





















Where to start

Perhaps uncharacteristically for a compliance platform, Compliance Manager makes it really easy to dive in from day one. In our opinion, this is largely due to Compliance Score's ability to create quick and easy inroads into Purview's compliance capabilities, bringing a clear, impact-focussed approach to risk improvement actions that virtually eliminates decision-paralysis.

Step 1: Assess and Benchmark

Your initial score (when first activating Compliance Manager) will be based on the Microsoft 365 Data Protection Baseline template. This covers all the most common data protection requirements (from EU GDPR, NIST & ISO 27001) giving you an immediate sense of where you stand on the compliance spectrum, and what you can do to move forward.

Keep in mind, some metrics (like your technology controls) will pull through automatically and some (like people and processes) will need your input. Rest assured, the intuitive interfaces make it easy to see which is which, and to level up onto more advanced/specialised (paid) templates once you've covered the (free) basics.

Step 2: Prioritise and Plan

Knowing what needs to be done is one thing. Knowing where to start is quite another. Compliance Manager addresses this all-toocommon challenge under the Improvement Actions tab on its dashboard.

Here, you'll find a list of recommended improvement actions in priority order, based on their risk mitigation potential. When in doubt, start at the beginning and work your way through the list. Alternatively, consider your own immediate business goals and strategies, and adjust the recommended order as necessary to achieve your desired outcomes.



Microsoft Purview in action

In the race for contractual partnerships to develop and distribute Covid-19 vaccinations, a global pharmaceuticals company found themselves needing to demonstrate – very rapidly – their compliance with privacy regulations like GDPR and ISO-27001 standards. Doing so would enable them to collaborate with developers of the vaccine using Office 365 as a secure, compliant collaboration platform – a requirement for securing the contract.

The company approached Cloud Essentials to expedite the process of benchmarking their current compliance stance, remediating any shortfalls, and implementing any additional controls necessary to meet the project's stringent compliance and security requirements.

Microsoft Purview and Compliance Manager were pivotal components of Cloud Essential's solution. They enabled us to rapidly bring the client's environment in line with the necessary standards and – importantly – prove that we had done so.

What we learned:

- Benchmarking/gap analyses is a powerful catalyst for identifying where to focus and what actions to take.
- 2. Things happen a lot faster when there is a commercially compelling reason to demonstrate compliance driving immediate buy-in from senior execs.









Levelling up

Compliance Manager certainly makes it easier to get a compliance journey started, but its value extends well beyond those initial phases.

The more you work with the platform, inputting and capturing evidence of people and process controls, and using specialised templates to achieve your desired outcomes, the more comprehensive a picture you'll get of your organisation's compliance goals and trajectory.

That said, no matter how powerful Compliance Manager and Compliance Score are, they cannot operate in a vacuum. The success of any compliance programme also relies on all stakeholders being engaged and on the same page. That kind of collaboration can be tricky when business and IT tend to speak very different languages, with risk and compliance teams often sceptical of solutions that stem from the technology space.

Having a compliance partner (well-versed in both languages) to facilitate these conversations can make all the difference.

Get in touch to find out more



















Clarity and direction.

Your Microsoft compliance journey.

Accelerated.

The Cloud Essentials difference

We firmly believe that the best solutions are just as much about people and processes as they are about technology.

We will always take your unique organisational context into account and ensure we leave you with the knowledge, skills and understanding that underpin a sustainable compliance strategy.

Uniquely, we speak the languages of IT, innovation, governance, risk AND compliance to help accelerate initiatives and deliver business benefits for everyone.

Ready to unlock the power of Microsoft Purview?

We know that every Microsoft 365 compliance journey is different. Get in touch to arrange a discovery call to see how we can help you enhance your compliance maturity with Microsoft Purview.

Microsoft Purview Compliance Accelerator

giving you access to our unique combination

of compliance, business and technical skills. Services could include advisory, technical Goal:

Find out more

















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