

Significant Changes for External Client Licensing on Microsoft Products

By Christopher Barnett

With the release of the 2013 versions of Exchange Server, Lync Server and SharePoint Server, Microsoft is dispensing with the requirement that companies purchase client licensing for “external users.” External users are defined as “*users that are not either your or your affiliates’ employees, or your or your affiliates’ onsite contractors or onsite agents.*”

In the past, it has been necessary to purchase either client access licenses (CALs) or External Connector (EC) licenses for external users accessing Exchange, Lync or SharePoint servers. ECs often were the best option for companies with large numbers of external users, because they allowed unlimited access by those external users to the servers to which they were assigned. However, ECs also were fairly expensive, and they made the licensing for those products more costly and burdensome.

Happily, the licensing rules for the 2013 versions have dispensed with this requirement. Access rights to standard product functionality by external users is now included with the server licenses. However, certain additive or enterprise-level functionality will require additive CALs. For Exchange, that heightened functionality includes the following:

- Unified Messaging
- In-Place Archive
- In-Place Holds (Indefinite, Query-based, and Time-based)
- Advanced Mobile Policies
- Information Protection and Compliance
- Custom Retention Policies
- Per User/Distribution List Journaling
- Site Mailboxes – Compliance
- Data Loss Prevention

In addition, while a company’s Exchange, Lync or SharePoint server software may no longer require CALs or ECs for external users, the Windows Operating system will continue to require appropriate client licensing for all users who are authenticated or individually recognized by the server software.

These changes may result in significant savings for many businesses, but it remains critical to stay abreast of all licensing requirements and to apply those rules correctly in order to avoid unnecessary licensing exposure.



About the author Christopher Barnett:

Christopher represents clients in a variety of business, intellectual property and IT-related contexts, with matters involving trademark registration and enforcement, software and licensing disputes and litigation, and mergers, divestments and service transactions. Christopher’s practice includes substantial attention to concerns faced by media & technology companies and to disputes involving new media, especially the fast-evolving content on the Internet.

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