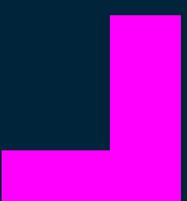Technical Communications

Australian Azure Migration

Last Updated:

29 Jan 2025

Overview of what's happening

We are migrating Forsta Plus sites from Rackspace to Microsoft Azure cloud globally. All Forsta Plus client projects and solution configurations will be migrated from the current site to the Microsoft Azure cloud site.

For this migration we have chosen a "lift and shift" approach meaning that the entire platform will be migrated 'as is' ensuring data safety and integrity.

Post-migration, all data will continue to reside within its original territory. Data is not moving outside of its original territory as part of this migration.

Dates

The migration will be performed over the weekend of 5th-6th April 2025.

Downtime

During the migration, there will be complete downtime affecting all parts of the system, including respondents, professional users, and end users. The system will be inaccessible starting at 12 AM AEDT on Saturday, 5 April 2025 and will be back up and running by 11:59 PM AEDT on Sunday, 6 April 2025. Once the migration is complete, we will send another email and update the status on our status page.

Security

Azure is one of the most respected and trusted cloud platforms in our industry, with an outstanding array of security and data management features. Azure prioritises security and compliance, with a range of built-in security features and compliance certifications for various industry standards and regulations. As security threats evolve, Azure will continue enhancing its security measures to address emerging challenges.

The migration will introduce a higher level of scalability based on site usage and improved security features.

Compliance

Target Azure environment will have the same SOC 2 Type II compliance as current site.

Impacted areas and instructions for clients.

The "lift and shift" migration strategy ensures integrity of customer data and the exact same state of the system as before the migration.

However, some small changes will still be required to be done by customers, such as:

— IP whitelisting

— DNS configuration for emailing and custom URLs

Detailed instructions will follow with the next technical communication from us.

What's happening to the existing Rackspace site

Post-migration, you will not be able to access the old Rackspace site. Four to six weeks after the migration is completed, we will decommission the old Rackspace site.

All current URLs will point to new Azure environment post-migration.

Test Migrations

We will be performing a series of test migrations leading up to the final migration on the weekend of 5-6 April 2025. During these test migrations, the production environment will not be affected.

Next contact date from us

You'll hear from us within the next few weeks after we have performed our simulation of migration. At that time, we will provide additional details on any changes that need to be completed by your team.

FAQ

Frequently asked questions are categorised as follows:

1. **Access**
2. **Changes**
3. **General**
4. **Migration details**
5. **Security**

ACCESS:

Q: Where will I login to Forsta Plus after the migration?

A: You will continue to use the same URLs to login to the platform after the migration.

Q: Will new log in credentials be required to log into Forsta Plus after migration to MS Azure Cloud site is complete?

A: All systems will be accessible with current credentials.

Q: Will new login credentials be required to log into sFTP?

A: No, you will continue to use the same login. You will need to adjust the IP address and whitelist if applicable.

CHANGES:

Q: Will the platform's user interface undergo any changes, and will there be any other noticeable differences compared to what Forsta Plus looks like today?

A: No,changes will be made to the user interface, nor other visual aspects of the platform.

Q: Will there be any changes made to email send out service as part of migrating Forsta Plus to MS Azure Cloud site?

A: Current email send-out service supplier will be replaced by AWS based in Australian territory. You will need to update your DNS record if you currently have your own domain name.

Our support team will work with you to update this prior to the migration.

Q: Will there be any changes to our custom URLs?

A: No, URLs will not change.

Q: Do we need to do anything to support our custom URLs?

A: On our Azure sites, we are using Let's Encrypt as a Certificate Authority (CA) generating certificates on our client's behalf. For this process to work, some domain level pre-requisites will need to be in place. All custom domains will have to be verified and some might need changes for this to work.

We will contact customers who require changes.

Q: If we're using IP whitelisting, will we need to whitelist new IP addresses?

A: Yes, but we recommend whitelisting URLs instead. If you need to whitelist IP addresses, please let us know and we will work with you.

Q: Will links to web surveys and sFTP be affected due to Forsta Plus being moved to MS Azure Cloud site?

A: URLs to web surveys will not change, but IP addresses will change for both web surveys and sFTP. As long as you use URLs in your links, nothing will change.

Q: Will there be any changes made to File Library storage limits affecting storage pricing after Forsta Plus is migrated to MS Azure Cloud site?

A: No changes will be made to existing storage limits, nor costs associated with existing storage limits.

GENERAL:

Q: Where will the Australian MS Azure Cloud site be located?

A: New South Wales, Australia

Q: Why is Forsta HX Platform being moved from Rackspace to MS Azure Cloud?

A: Azure benefits include:

— Microsoft's extensive ecosystem and continuous innovation, providing access to cutting-edge technologies and solutions
— Complies with in-country data residency
— Built-in and improved monitoring capabilities
— Azure's SLAs ensure high levels of service availability

— Improved run time resilience and disaster recovery

Q: Will interview progress be lost due to migration?

A: No submitted data will be lost during the migration. However, suppose a respondent is in the middle of answering 10 questions on a page and has not moved to the next page when we shut down the platform. Those answers will not be saved and when they go back to complete the survey after the migration, they will need to answer those questions again.

Interviewing will not be available during the downtime. Post-migration, respondents will be able to pick up from the top of the last page they visited pre-migration.

Q: How much of this information can we share with our end-clients and third-party partners?

A: It is very important that the details of the migration are communicated to end-clients and third-party partners due to the downtime over the migration weekend.

MIGRATION DETAILS:

Q: How long will the existing SaaS site be accessible?

A: Existing site won't be accessible after the migration.

Q: How will Forsta Plus site migration to MS Azure Cloud be managed?

A: We have worked closely with Microsoft to create a successful migration plan. Our internal teams are all working in close collaboration through testing to work towards a successful migration.

During this time, if you have any other questions, please contact our Migration Project Manager, **Emily Gaudette.**

Q: Will the migration cause downtime limiting access to the Forsta Plus?

A: Yes, there will be site downtime from 12 AM AEDT on Saturday, 5 April 2025 and will be back up and running by 11:59 PM AEDT on Sunday, 6 April 2025.

Q: How will client data be migrated; is there a risk for data loss?

A: The entire platform will be migrated using a "lift and shift" process ensuring data safety and integrity. Client data will be moved using migration tools allowing for a smooth, automated process. We aim to minimize any disruptions and potential data loss. We will create back-up for migrated inventory items and ensure all items on the migration inventory list are migrated.

Q: Is there a rollback plan if something goes wrong with the migration?

A: If something goes wrong during the migration window, we will continue to use the original site as is. Nothing on the current site will change during the migration process.

Q: Can clients run live surveys while their data and solution configurations are being migrated?

A: No. During the migration weekend the whole system will be down and not accessible to any clients - professional or end users.

SECURITY:

Q: Will my data be secure?

A: Azure is one of the most respected and trusted cloud platforms in our industry, with an outstanding array of security and data management features. We see this migration as an improvement / advancement of our security measures.

Q: Will Azure enable BYO encryption?

A: This is currently not available on Forsta Plus, however, Forsta R&D will set out to build the feature in Forsta Plus.