OBJECTIF**LUNE**

WordPress & Cloud FAQs

Word Press Technical Article. No. 5

WordPress & Cloud - FAQ's

Over the last 2 years, we have been creating demos to help people understand the full benefits of OL Connect products. We chose to focus these demo on specific solutions namely; proof of delivery and accounts receivable, and we're planning to produce more in the future.

In order to make these demos available to everyone 24/7 and allow them to be shown with or without a PC -even from a tablet or mobile - they have been deployed in the Cloud (Azure) and some of them - even though it might not be obvious - use WordPress as a front-end too.

For those of you reading this, that just want to benefit from the demos, please use the link
http://demo.objectiflune.com

For those of you that want to understand more about what WordPress and the Cloud are - and why we use them - we've prepared some FAQ's

Frequently Asked Questions

What is WordPress?

- o   WordPress is a free and open-source content management system (CMS) based on PHP & MySQL. It includes a plugin architecture and a template system and is most associated with blogging but supports other types of web content. Used by more than 60 million websites, including 33.6% of the top 10 million websites as of April 2019, WordPress is the most popular website management system in use.

Why do you use WordPress?

- o   We use WordPress as an example of how a front-end sytem can use OL Connect products in the background, and as an example of using a CMS in combination with those products. OL Connect provdies content creation and automation in response to requests from the user at the front-end. For our online demos or products, where user control and user-based content is required, we chose to use WordPress because it's widely used, open source (free) and - when deployed and managed correctly - secure.

How much does WordPress cost?

o   Open source software is software that is accessible by the public to improve upon and freely redistribute. However, if you want a hosted WordPress service there are several plans available. We use a free version in our demos because we host it on our own servers.

Is WordPress secure?

o   As with all systems, security is more about policies and updates. So, WordPress is secure if managed properly, and kept up to date. In that sense it's no different from other software such as Microsoft Windows.

Who installs and configures WordPress?

o   We would normally expect the customer's IT department, or a 3rd party hired by them, to install and configure their own WordPress server. If we (OL) have suitable access, then it can be done as part of our professional services.

Who does the support for WordPress?

o   WordPress is open source software but there are many consultants available to support it. That said, where we have created a specific plug-in for WordPress as part of our official product offering, OL would support it and all related aspects that make it work with OL Connect products. Any modification made to our plug-ins, or new ones created, by the csutomer, a 3rd party or even by our own engineers, as part of a custom implementation, would not be supported.

Who does the training for WordPress?

o   WordPress training is available on the web for free, and there are constultants available to do more specific courses. That said, where we have created a product that runs in a WordPress environment, full training for that product and its WordPress related components or plug-ins will be provided by OL.

If I need help with WordPress where do I go?

o   You can get support from OL if the WordPress issue is directly related to an offical product that we have promoted on our web site. WordPress support and training beyond our products and solutions is available freely on the web or via consultants or companies that offer more tailored services.

How much training will we need to use WordPress?

o   The basics of WordPress can be learned very quickly using any number of online videos. That said, WordPress power comes from its plug-ins, each of which need to be understood if you intend to use them. Where we provide a plug-in with an offical product or solution our documentation will provide everything you need to know.

Why do I need OL Connect products and WordPress?

o   WordPress is not a pre-requisite for using OL Connect products. You could choose a different system for CMS purposes, and there are different options for front-end servers as well. That said, we chose WordPress as the platform for plug-in development because it was open source and readily available to our customers.

Why do you use WordPress for your online demos?

o   WordPress provides an easy to way to have user access control (required login), and user preferences that some of our samples require. We also prefer to not have OL Connect products directly connected to the Internet.

Can OL Connect products / Wordpress use and/or share an existing database?

o   By default, both OL Connect products and WordPress use MySQL as their backend database. They can be both be configured to use MS SQL, use an existing database installation instead of installing a new one and share a common instance by using different schemas.

Does Wordpress support Single-sign On (LDAP, Active Directory, SAML, etc.)?

o   Yes. A number of 3rd party plugins allow WordPress to interface with AD, LDAP and SAML servers for authentication purposes.

Can WordPress be hosted under my domain (or subdomain)?

o   Yes, although it should be noted that depending on your infrastructure, a reverse proxy server or a new routing table might be necessary to forward requests from your current domain to the WordPress instance

Can Wordpress be run in a clustered webserver environment?

o   WordPress can run in a High Availability clustered environment but such setups will require 3rd party consultant to advise on how best to do this. Invariably additional components will be required such as a load balancer, multiple web servers and replicated databases.

What are your recommendations for deploying WordPress?

o   There are many different flavours of WordPress packages out there but they all share the same three base elements: a Web Server, a Scripting language to drive that Web Server, and a Database to store content. Their deployment depends on serveral factors, so it's not possible to provide one recommendation for everyone. That said we do have a Architectural summary that will help. wordpress-ol-connect-architecture

Can I use another system instead of WordPress?

o   Our demos and future products use plug-ins that we developed in PHP for WordPress. If another system is used, these plug-ins would need to be re-created. We plan on making some of our plug-ins available on the WordPress store so the code will be open and free to use as inspirtation for another system.

Does OL set up the External IP address for routing etc?

o   In order to obtain a public IP address or domain name (linked to it), you or your IT department will
    need to contact your Internet Service Provider who, for a fee - if they offer the service - will be able to
    set it up for you. Once you have your IP address, your router and firewall will need to be configured
    to redirect outside traffic to a dedicated PC on which your web server is running. So, you need to get
    your own IP address, but OL can help you with advice on how to setup your system from the router
    to your PC.

Do OL Connect products work with Azure and/or AWS?

o   OL Connect products do work on Azure and AWS. Bear in mind that these are platforms in the cloud
    that are basically running Windows Virtual Machines.

What versions or limitations are there?

o   OL Connect products require dedicated hardware. If the hardware never changes, then our license
    codes will always work. If the hardware is changed for any reason (more RAM, more disk space), then
    it might require the license to be re-activated. For instance, when AWS introduced a new M5
    arcchitecture, it caused an issue with our licensing code that has since been fixed. So in general there
    are no version or limitations beyond the need for dedicated hardware.

What exactly do you mean by Cloud?

o   The Cloud means "not on premise". It could be a PC hosted in a private data center or a PC hosted
    on a public data center like Azure or AWS. A Cloud-based system requires you to have an internet
    connection to access it.

What Cloud options are available and which ones do you support?

o   OL Connect products should run on any Cloud-based environment that supports a Windows OS
    version for which Connect has been certified (see the System Requirements section in our on-line
    help)

What are your recommendations for deploying OL Connect products in the Cloud?

o   The main thing to consider when deploying OL Connect products in the cloud is the hardware specification - make sure it's powerful enough to avoid making changes later on that could require a new license code. Beyond that, you need a good internet connection to maximise performance between it and your customers.

Do you prefer Azure or Amazon?

o   From a product point of view, we don't mind. That said we use Azure because it's the platform of choice for our IT Department.

Do you support Azure or AWS?

o   We don't provide technical support on these platforms by themselves, but our products run on both.

Do you test your products on Azure or AWS?

o   While we do not perform continuous testing on Azure or AWS, all of our Solutions Frameworks are developed and implemented on Azure, which allows us to catch any potential issue.

How scalable is your solution?

o   OL Connect products can be made to run faster by installing performance packs, which require more RAM and CPU to maximise their value. In addition, multiple instances of OL Connect products can be installed in the Cloud (each requires a license) and linked together. With a combination of performance packs and/or multiple instances, we can scale as much as you need.

How does your licensing model work in the Cloud?

o   Simply put, you'll need a license for each OL Connect product (instance) that you use. If you run two copies of the same product using the same serial number - then the license of one will be disabled.

Does OL Connect run in a browser?

o   OL Connect products do NOT run in a browser. However, they can create content that will run in a browser which includes the ability to interact with users via a combination of automated processes and templates.

Does OL provide training for Azure or AWS?

o   We do not. Such things are hosted. As far as these platforms go, they are simply PCs on which our software is installed. In that regard it's like installing on-premise.

How much will it cost to use Azure or AWS?

o   We do not provide hosting services so real costs need to be discussed with a provider. The business models vary dramatically, some charging for data use, some for backup and failover, so they key is to decide what you need and then shop around.

Who does the hosting?

o   Microsoft, Amazon, Google and many private companies provide hosting services

Where will it be hosted?

o   Private data center service providers tend to host in their own region, but global service providers like Microsoft & AWS generally have a number of hosting locations around the world. You can find out who offers what locations by checking out their web sites.

What does Safe Harbor mean?

o   Safe Harbor was a framework for regulating transatlantic exchanges of personal data for commercial purposes between the EU and the US that was declared invalid by the European Court of Justice in 2015. A new framework called EU-US Privacy Shield, which replaces it, was established in 2016.

How do OL Connect products support GDPR?

o   In the context of GDPR, our products are risk agnostic, as they are used to process data in a transitory way, meaning that no data is permanently stored. They act as middleware and so they do not create a GDPR-related risk for their users. That said we prepared more information here …
more on GDPR

How can you guarantee that my data is safe?

o   Data security is always the responsibility of the customer. OL can be a partner in providing information and advising on how OL Connect products can be used, but ultimately we are not security experts, and it's up to the customer's security officers to sign off on the resulting IT infrastructure, and software architecture.

Can I segment data for multiple clients?

o   OL Connect products use a single database for temporary processing and that database will clean itself at preset intervals. If output is stored elsewhere then it's important to think about where and how it's stored to maintain data segmentation. Some customers use folders named after a unique customer ID, in which all other documents are placed, others use one or more databases. Connect supports either method. The most secure way to keep data segemented is to install multiple instances of an OL Connect product.

What is your Cloud Roadmap?

o   We plan to create boxed solutions that can be offered as self-onboarding SaaS services hosted by OL but available through our partners. At the same time we will enhance our products by developing specific features to facilitate these cloud services whilst allowing our customised solutions to be deployed on-premise or in the cloud.

Do you have customers that are using WordPress with OL Connect products?

o   Yes, we have several customers using WordPress with OL Connect products. Whilst we can't mention their names specifically here are three examples:

1. A customer in Denmark, uses PlanetPress Connect with Capture OnTheGo and WordPress to capture data from over 500 users, running a customised app for their mobile devices.

2. A Print Service Provider in Germany, use WordPress to authenticate users and control preferences that allow PlanetPress Connect to capture desktop print over the internet into a job submission portal workflow for ongoing centralised fulfilment.

3. A global customer who uses WordPress multi-site around the world to authenticate users for various content creation and approval processes based around PReS Connect.

Do you have customers that are using Azure / AWS?

Yes, we have many customers and partners using private data centers, Azure and AWS.

Can we run your demo Solutions on-premise?

Our demos were developed on servers running in Azure. The resources and documentation for these demos are available as "Solution Frameworks" which include everything you need to know in order for them to be installed on-premise.