

Matthew Pollock

Azure Cloud & Security Architect

Microsoft Certified: Azure Solutions Architect Expert | DevOps Engineer Expert

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PROFILE

I architect and run enterprise Microsoft environments — identity, email, endpoint, cloud platform, and the security architecture across all of it. My background is deep Microsoft infrastructure — Exchange, Active Directory, Windows Server — now centred on Azure, with cloud security leading the work. I operate an AI-assisted delivery model — spec-driven, multi-agent execution under human sign-off — through which I have architected and delivered multiple production AI platforms and now run the majority of routine operations. Azure-native by design, hybrid by reality.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- Architected and delivered multiple production AI platforms on Microsoft Azure — customer interaction analytics and operational decision support, in daily business use — owning solution architecture, security, delivery and operations end to end.
- Operate an enterprise AI-assisted delivery model in which the majority of routine operations execute through governed AI agents — spec-driven, multi-agent (Claude Code, Codex), delivered through Azure DevOps and spanning infrastructure change, security operations, reporting and documentation.
- Engineered the governance framework for agentic operations on production Azure, Entra ID and Defender: dedicated least-privilege agent identity with just-in-time elevation, read-only default posture, plan-before-execute approval on privileged actions, session transcripts and audit logging, test-first execution with rollback by design.
- Took the estate to zero physical servers — every on-premises server and domain controller decommissioned across all sites, a first in the organisation's history — eliminating hardware refresh cycles and completing the move to a consumption-based cost model.
- Sustained Microsoft Secure Score at 88–90% across a hybrid enterprise estate through a continuous Defender-led hardening cycle.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Cloud & IT Infrastructure Lead — AX Ltd

Dec 2024 – Present

Cloud and security lead for a 500+ employee business — fully Azure-native, hybrid Microsoft estate.

- Own architecture and security posture across identity (Microsoft Entra ID, hybrid AD), email (Exchange Online, Mimecast), endpoint (Microsoft Intune) and the Azure platform (compute, storage, governance, backup/DR).
- Run security operations across Microsoft Defender for Endpoint and Microsoft Sentinel — audit, remediate, validate, with KQL for detection and investigation.
- Decommissioned the estate's final on-premises domain controllers and physical servers across all sites — zero physical servers for the first time in the organisation's history.
- Direct AI-assisted operations at enterprise scale — the majority of routine operational work executes through governed agents (Claude Code, Codex): read-only by default, plan-before-execute approval on privileged actions, dedicated least-privilege identity with JIT elevation.
- Architected and delivered multiple production AI platforms — customer interaction analytics and operational decision support — end to end on Azure, in daily business use.
- Govern data protection across the estate with Microsoft Purview, Azure Policy, Azure Backup and Site Recovery.
- Deliver infrastructure change as code through Azure DevOps — Bicep, PowerShell.

IT Infrastructure Manager — AX Ltd

Jul 2017 – Dec 2024

Managed a team of five infrastructure engineers across multiple UK depot locations; owned the infrastructure budget and vendor relationships.

- Led the migration to Microsoft Azure — datacentres decommissioned, hardware refresh cycles eliminated, operations shifted from CapEx to a consumption-based OpEx model.
- Delivered SD-WAN and network modernisation projects, improving uptime across multiple UK depot locations.
- Designed and implemented disaster recovery plans, strengthening business continuity.
- Deployed the Microsoft security stack — Defender for Endpoint, Identity and Cloud; Entra ID Conditional Access, MFA, SSPR and PIM; Intune device management.

Senior Messaging Engineer — AX Ltd

Nov 2011 – Jul 2017

- Led Exchange migrations (2010/2013/2019, Exchange Online) and domain controller refreshes, consolidating the server estate onto substantially fewer hosts.
- Ran the email estate end to end: Exchange, Mimecast, mail hygiene and security, archiving and compliance.
- Strengthened Active Directory and Group Policy standards; improved monitoring and automation, reducing incident resolution times.

IT Systems Support Engineer — Ofqual

Apr 2010 – Nov 2011

Technical lead for network infrastructure upgrades and enterprise systems support across two offices.

Distributed Systems Analyst — Newell PLC

Mar 2008 – Apr 2010

EMEA hardware lifecycle management and multi-region systems support; UK representative on the IT Standards Committee.

PROJECTS

Enterprise AI platforms — customer interaction analytics and operational decision support (AX Ltd)

Architected and delivered two production AI platforms on Microsoft Azure, end to end: solution architecture, security, delivery pipelines through Azure DevOps, and operations. In daily business use.

Agentic AI operations — governance framework (AX Ltd)

Designed and enforce the control framework for AI agents on production infrastructure — dedicated least-privilege identity, just-in-time elevation, read-only default posture, plan-before-execute approval, session transcripts and audit logs. Audited the original setup, found the acting identity over-privileged, and cut over to the scoped model through which the majority of routine operations now run.

Business continuity and disaster recovery (AX Ltd)

Designed and deployed organisation-wide protection on Azure Site Recovery and Azure Backup; currently evaluating next-generation cyber-resilience tooling to strengthen recovery assurance.

Azure security and identity framework (AX Ltd)

Designed and deployed identity-led security architecture on Zero Trust principles — Conditional Access, MFA, PIM — hardening access control across the hybrid estate.

SKILLS

- **Identity & Access Management** — Microsoft Entra ID (Azure AD), Conditional Access, PIM, hybrid AD, MFA/SSPR
- **Threat Protection & SIEM** — Microsoft Defender for Endpoint, Defender for Cloud, Defender for Identity, Microsoft Sentinel, KQL
- **Endpoint Management** — Microsoft Intune, Autopilot, compliance baselines
- **Email Security** — Exchange Online, hybrid Exchange, Mimecast, SPF/DKIM/DMARC
- **Cloud Platform** — Microsoft Azure: compute, storage, networking fundamentals, App Gateway, Key Vault, governance, cost management
- **Governance & Data Protection** — Microsoft Purview, Azure Policy, Azure Backup, Azure Site Recovery
- **Automation & IaC** — Bicep, Terraform, ARM, PowerShell, Python, Azure DevOps Pipelines, GitHub Actions
- **AI Operations** — agentic AI on production infrastructure (Claude Code, Codex) under human sign-off
- **Leadership & Delivery** — technical leadership, team management, vendor and budget ownership, mentoring
- **AWS** — EC2, S3, IAM, Route 53, CloudFormation

CERTIFICATIONS

- Microsoft Certified: Azure Solutions Architect Expert (AZ-305)
- Microsoft Certified: DevOps Engineer Expert (AZ-400)
- Microsoft Certified: Azure Security Engineer Associate (AZ-500)
- Microsoft Certified: Azure Administrator Associate (AZ-104)
- AWS Certified Solutions Architect – Associate
- 17 Microsoft certifications, five active including two Expert-level

PERSONAL

Keen birder, cyclist, runner, gardener and occasional rock vocalist.