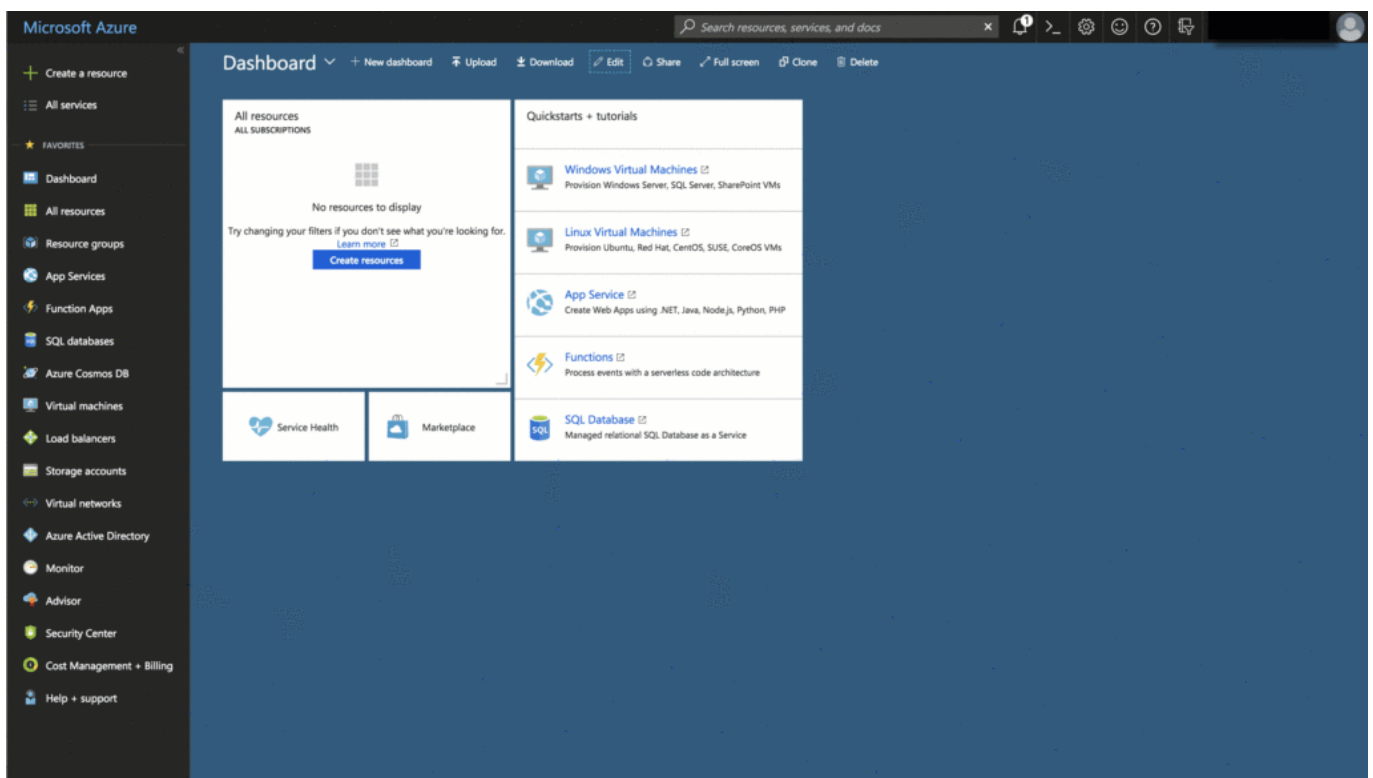


Customize your Azure Portal - Your Azure, Your Way

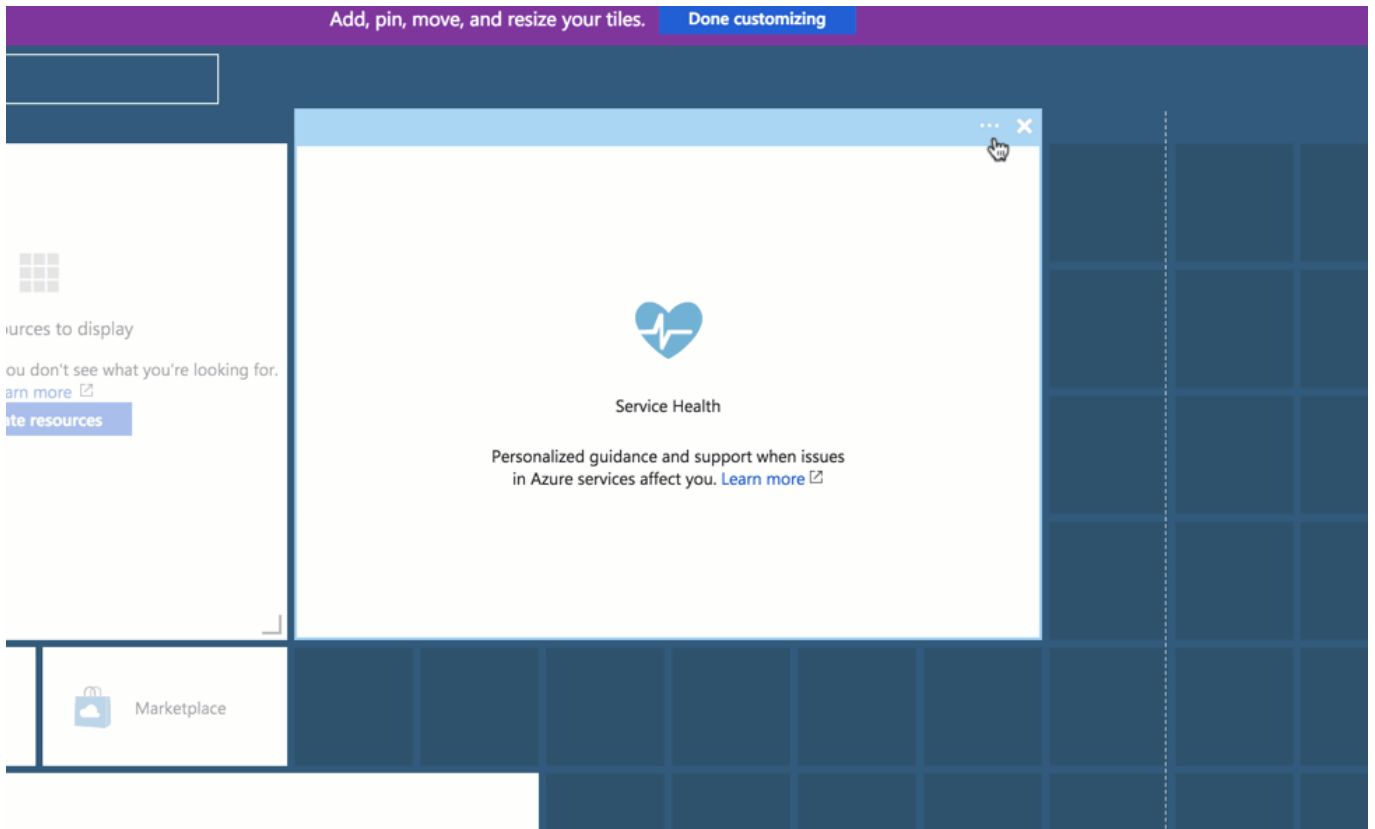
It isn't just Burger King that let's you "have it your way" today as we see the launch of the fully customizable Azure Cloud dashboard option. It's a very cool way to set up a portal that makes your goto items easy to see and quick to access. One of the most common complaints among systems admins as they explore more public cloud products is the lack of a centralized view. This is not the proverbial single pane of glass, but it is a very nifty way to get the Azure content you need in your default view.



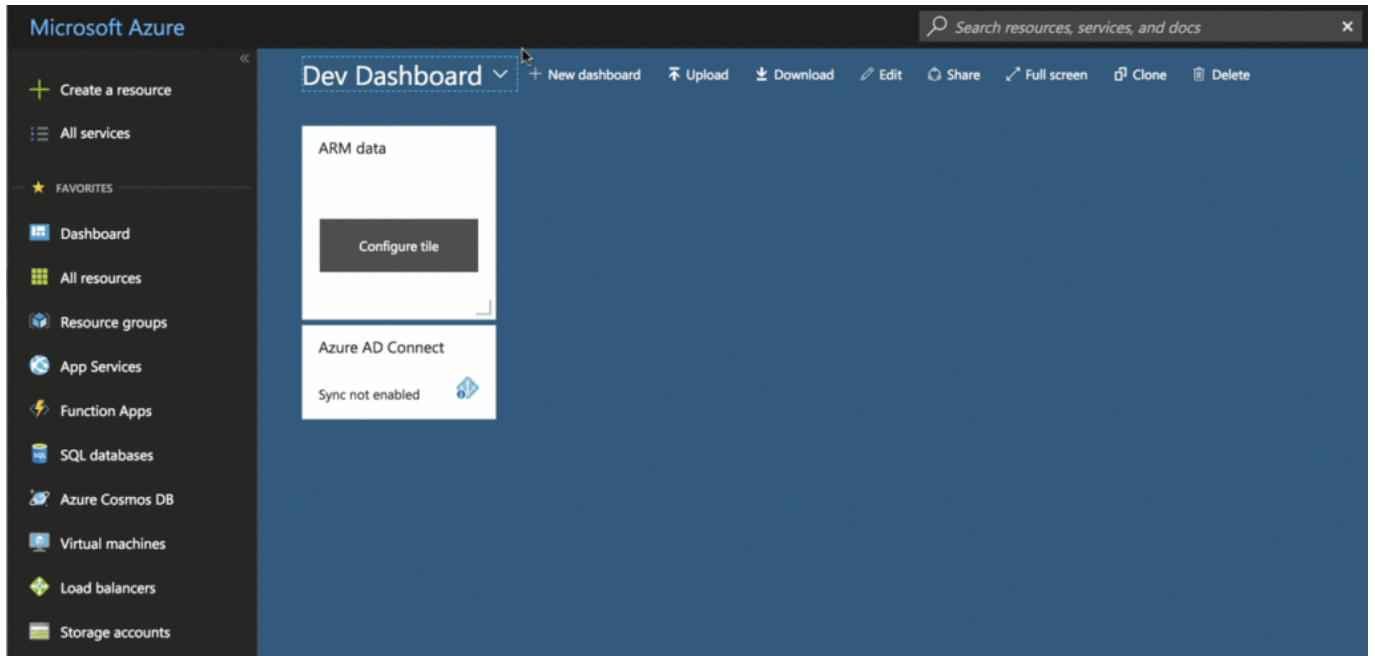
Once you log into your Azure dashboard, you'll see the Edit button at the top which lets you add a number of different widgets to the default view.

Sizing and Customizing

Choosing the location of your widgets is drag and drop level of easy as you can see in the image above. One thing that is not drag and drop at the moment is the widget sizing. Simply click the three dots in the bar that show up as you hover over your widget in edit mode to get access to the size layout chooser:



As you set up your custom view, you will also see that you can create more than one dashboard. This is a handy option if you have multiple environments that you want to see in context. Choose the drop arrow at the top title section of your dashboard to create and change dashboards.



There are lots of good things coming in the Azure environment which show the enterprise focus that Microsoft is putting into things. As a consumer of all three of the major public clouds (AWS, Azure, GCP), I am becoming more used to finding the focus areas and advantages in certain portions. Having this first update to the customized dashboards looks like a very admin/Ops type of advantage. Looking forward to seeing more updates in the UI/UX as this and other features evolve.

[DiscoPosse VMUG Presentation \(2012\): Admin Scripting, Tips & Tricks](#)

In spring 2012 I was lucky enough to be able to be a presenter at the Toronto VMUG. The presentation I gave was titled Admin Scripting, Tips & Tricks. This is a little blast from the past for me, and anyone who was there for it.

The focus of the presentation is bringing some scripting, automation and changing the way that we deal with some of our day-to-day tasks as sysadmins. This is nowhere near the automation level that we are at today, but for many folks this is still the untouched first step towards introducing some more automation into their processes.

I thought it might be a worthwhile read, and although some of the content is verbal, the general concepts are covered in the PDF of the presentation. Hopefully someone will find some use from it.

There should be some more presentations coming out in the next while as I dive deeper into the vCO and Puppet work that I'm doing. I'm very excited to share that info ☐

Download the PDF copy here: [Admin Scripting, Tips & Tricks](#)



[Steel Doesn't Float](#)

At a recent Toronto VMware User Group I was inspired by a comment made during Mike Laverick's keynote session. The gist of the remark was around how a ship is not really designed to float based on it's materials, but in the way it's constructed by using ballasts for displacement.

I'd like to expand a bit on this idea. We've all heard this saying before:

The whole is greater than the sum of its parts

While its origins date back to the greek philosophers, the concept holds true today. Let's look at the raw science of it which is that steel doesn't float. Take your finest stainless steel cutlery and drop it into a sink full of water.

Just in case you aren't playing along at home with the experiment I'll give you a hint: it sinks. It is a pretty simple experiment. So now that we've exhibited the basics of the buoyancy, or lack of buoyancy in this case, of steel.

This is steel

So we've seen steel in its raw form, but as you know it can be crafted, molded, and manufactured into many different forms and products.



This...also steel

How this applies to technology is really not much different than the way it applies to create the beautifully engineered QEII pictured above. While the raw materials in and of themselves do not hold anywhere near the capability of the final product, they are necessary and fundamental building blocks for the end result.

Take the same approach when you look at software and infrastructure for your IT organization. Again the raw parts, whether static or dynamic, come together in a carefully designed way to provide services to be consumed by the customer. The customer may be your internal workforce, or they may be your clients who drive your business.

To the consumer of your services, the underlying infrastructure, the way you've created it and the effort to maintain it is irrelevant. In their minds it is simply a service which serves a business purpose and achieves a business result.

Our goal in IT is to take raw materials in the form of processes and technologies and bring them together to create a product which will ultimately be more important, and more spectacular than any single item that went into it's creation.

The inverse to this is that the end product (such as our floating vessel) is only as strong as any single part of it's original construction. If we use shoddy materials to create the end product then no matter how stunning it may be in appearance, it has an Achilles heel somewhere in the system. So in the same way that we did our experiment with the fork, the beautiful ship will now be a future attraction for people to view in the "how not do do this" category.



This used to be a really cool website before it sunk

One more thing that you need to account for in the construction and creation of your end product is that the end result may have an exposure to elements that the underlying ingredients were able to withstand as standalone products. For this reason we have to really have a top-down and bottom-up understanding of the whole product and its infrastructure.

I'll close with this illustration of how the collective is weaker than the parts with the classic video of the Tacoma Narrows bridge which became an unfortunate victim of mechanical resonance. Amazing and humbling all at the same time.