



How to select the right Office 365 backup solution

And why you need to have one in
the first place

Office 365 is in the cloud.

Do you really need a backup?

As organizations adapt IT infrastructure to address the changes in how we work, Office 365 has become the [go-to cloud productivity and collaboration tool](#). That means it's also the main repository of emails, documents, meetings, conversations, project plans, and more.

But what if you lost that data? Even a small portion of it?

The truth is, there's an ongoing debate about whether you need to backup SaaS data or not. Advocates of not backing up state that multiple synchronous copies of the data are stored in the cloud for high availability. That's good enough, right? Well, not really, according to proponents of maintaining a segregated backup, who say that replication copies are for availability and aren't a true backup.



Microsoft's native Office 365 capabilities for data protection include:

- Version history for each file.
- Deleted items retention to protect against accidental or malicious deletions (Recycle Bin).
- Litigation hold or retention policies to help prevent unwanted data destruction.

These are good features but the built-in capabilities aren't sufficient for organizations that expect and need an enterprise-grade backup and recovery toolset.

Office 365 native data protection

The challenges

Many IT leaders operate with the view that they must have a reliable backup and recovery solution in place before they offer a service to their user community. Given the built-in limitations on recovery in Office 365, this cautious approach is reasonable.

Here are some of the known challenges that come with relying on native Office 365 data protection:

Deleted items recovery

Deleted files are held for a set period of time in the recycle bin and purge folders. But a bad deletion (accidental or malicious) could go unnoticed past the prescribed expiry date. If items expire from the recycle bin and purge folders, there is no backup copy. But that isn't the only concern with deleted items in Office 365:

- Users have full access to recycle bins and can accidentally or maliciously delete data permanently with no recovery option.
- Bad actors are writing malware for Office 365 and these recycle bins have APIs in which programmatic deletion is supported.

- Recovering deleted files from the Recycle Bin works for small numbers of items, but bulk recovery scenarios prove it to be almost unusable. Furthermore, you cannot recover to an alternate location if the user account is no longer active.

Litigation hold or retention policies

Items marked for a litigation hold or with a retention policy generate hidden copies, but the recovery process isn't easy or user-friendly once the original file is deleted.

The deleted items recovery, litigation hold and retention policies weren't meant to be used in place of a segregated, full-coverage backup solution. Many organizations want to use these features for their intended purpose, but when they're hijacked for a data protection workaround, it nullifies the usefulness to do what they were developed to do.

Having a segregated backup of your Office 365 data can radically minimize data loss and free up the built-in features to be used more effectively. But how do you go about choosing the right backup solution for your organization?

Three critical features you need in an Office 365 backup solution

Not all backup solutions are created equal, so it's important to identify what you need before you start the conversation. At a minimum, you'll want to have the ability to do full coverage backups with flexible recovery options and a level of performance and scalability that grows with your organization. Beyond that, there are other advanced features to consider that will enhance your ability to protect, recover and even manage your organization's Office 365 data.

#1 – Full coverage

When a backup solution only protects mailboxes, but your organization heavily relies on Teams for internal communications, that solution isn't going to meet your needs. There are many offerings that only protect mailboxes, and some have expanded to protect OneDrive for Business as well.

A full-coverage backup solution should be able to target specific mailboxes or site collections with unique policies. Alternatively, it should be able to cover all mailboxes and/or OneDrive for Business site collections with a default policy.

When covering all targets with a default policy, the solution should auto-enroll new users when they're added to your organization so new mailboxes and OneDrive for Business are automatically included in the scope of protection.

If you're looking for a complete Office 365 backup solution, you want something that can handle all:

Mailboxes

- Active and archive mailboxes
- Public folder mailboxes
- Shared mailboxes

OneDrive for Business site collections

SharePoint site collections

- All content types
- Site hierarchies
- Permissions

Teams (and Groups) site collections

- Document libraries
- Conversations
- Wikis

Unified audit log

#2 – Flexible recovery

When your Office 365 backup solution gives you flexibility on recovery options, you'll have the ability to easily address unanticipated or unconventional recovery requirements. This can be particularly important when managing data through changing roles, staff turnover, and other organizational fluctuations.

Ensuring that you have flexible recovery options in your backup solution will give you peace of mind that you'll be able to provide efficient and effective recovery support for your organization.

Here are examples of what you can do with flexible recovery options:

- **Restore specific items, folders, mailboxes, or sites with multi-level recovery** – get your data back no matter what the data loss scenario happens to be.
- **Reinstate multiple mailboxes in a single operation** – resolve large-scale data loss affecting multiple users (malware including ransomware, viruses, etc.)
- **Recover data to a preferred location, including cross-tenant recovery/migration (and on-premises Exchange and SharePoint)** – flexibility for situations where users who need the data have changed or don't have access to the original location of the data such as M&A tenant-to-tenant migration or as part of an exit plan from the cloud.
- **Perform point-in-time recoveries** – roll back the clock on data to the point you need it.
- **Apply filters to your recovery** – recover an entire mailbox except for contacts or recover an entire dataset of OneDrive sites within a date range.
- **Maybe you don't need to recover** – give access to Office 365 accounts when employees leave or in the case of audits without having to maintain an active license.

#3 – Performance & scalability

You're already managing increasingly large volumes of data. The cloud makes this easier and more cost-effective as long as it can accommodate your organization as it grows with the level of performance and scalability you'll need to manage your data today, tomorrow and in the years to come.

When it comes to choosing for performance and scalability, your Office 365 backup solution needs to be able to:

- Scale to petabytes of data and billions of objects,
- Capture at rates of multiple terabytes per hour, and
- Augment incrementals with continuous data protection.

Making the shift from on-premises storage to the cloud is an investment that needs to be sustainable and usable. That's why it's essential for your chosen storage solution to be able to handle your needs as they grow.

Additional advanced features

Finding an Office 365 backup solution that gives you full coverage, flexible recovery, and a high level of performance and scalability will give your organization a strong security posture. But these additional features enhance your ability to protect and recover the right data at the right time.

Continuous data protection

When your Office 365 backup solution provides continuous data protection (CDP), it means the system actively monitors your data and automatically captures modifications in a near real-time manner. Unlike normal incremental scans or snapshots, which happen at scheduled intervals, CDP is always running to capture new and modified files as the changes occur.

Features like CDP can be useful for augmenting your Office 365 backup strategy by applying CDP to high-priority site collections and/or users to ensure the continuity and integrity of mission-critical data.

Secondary storage for former employees

Today's workers are increasingly transient, which leaves IT dealing with a data challenge when it comes to archiving inactive Office 365 user accounts to preserve data. This has become particularly important with the emergence of compliance regulations such as the European Union's (EU) General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA).

Finding a backup solution that provides auto archiving of Office 365 mailboxes and OneDrive data means you can avoid unnecessary licensing costs when someone leaves your organization.

Additionally, with a backup solution that gives flexibility around long-term retention, user data can be restored for anyone who might return to your organization in the future.

Choose the right Office 365 backup solution for your organization

Knowing what's possible and the benefits for your organization can make all the difference when evaluating each solution that allows you to protect and recover your Office 365 data.

Take a closer look at HubStor

HubStor is a cloud storage software company that helps enterprises manage and protect unstructured data. HubStor on Azure is a fully-managed solution, which means no added hardware and no cloud complexity for you to monitor and maintain. You can run your HubStor tenant in any Azure region for data sovereignty. You can also choose to run HubStor in your own Azure account or use HubStor's.

With HubStor, you and your data are never locked in. You can cancel anytime with no penalties or hassles with migrating data.

Want to learn more?

[Book Demo](#)



HubStor Inc.
515 Legget Drive, Suite 800
Ottawa, ON K2K 3G4

Toll-free: (855) 704-1737

Sales: sales@hubstor.net

Support: support@hubstor.net