

DCIG TOP 5

Office 365 Online SaaS Backup Solutions

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TOP 5 Office 365 Online SaaS Backup Solutions*

Spanning Backup for Office 365

Metallic Office 365 Backup

Spin Technology SpinOne
for Office 365StorageCraft Cloud Backup
for Office 365

Veritas Technologies SaaS Backup

*Licensing provider's solution listed first.
Other TOP 5 solutions listed in alphabetical order.

SOLUTIONS EVALUATED:

- Acronis Cyber Protect
- Altaro Office 365 Backup
- AvePoint Cloud Backup for Microsoft 365
- Barracuda Cloud-to-Cloud Backup for Office 365
- Carbonite Backup for Microsoft 365 Business
- CloudAlly Microsoft 365 Backup
- Datto SaaS Protection
- Druva Insync
- HubStor Enterprise
- Keepit SaaS Backup
- Metallic Office 365 Backup
- Spanning Backup for Office 365
- Spin Technology SpinOne for Office 365
- StorageCraft Cloud Backup for Office 365
- Veritas Technologies SaaS Backup

SOLUTION FEATURES EVALUATED:

- Anti-ransomware capabilities
- Backup capabilities
- Recovery and restore capabilities
- SaaS configuration, licensing, and pricing
- Support

Microsoft Office 365 Online Usage Takes Off

Organizations may long remember 2020 as the year the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically changed the world forever as they knew it. Due to stay-at-home requirements everywhere, staff from more organizations worked remotely using online office productivity software to collaborate and communicate. This directly benefited Microsoft Office 365 Online.

During 2020 Microsoft Office 365 Online experienced a dramatic increase in usage. Consider:

- Microsoft Office 365 is the cloud software-as-a-service (SaaS) most used by enterprises¹
- Monthly active Office 365 users approached 230 million, a 15% YoY increase.²
- Teams had more than 115 million active users at the end of September 2020. This represented an increase of 40 million users (more than 50%) from March 2020 and an increase of 100 million from April 2019.³

Your Data, Your Responsibility

Unfortunately, as organizations increase their usage of Office 365, they may overlook their need to back up data stored in it. Microsoft only takes responsibility for the hardware and software it uses to deliver and host Office 365 Online. It assumes limited or no responsibility for the data organizations host in it. Microsoft's Services Agreement punctuates this point with its disclaimer, "Your Content remains Your Content and you are responsible for it."⁴

Backing up data organizations keep in Office 365 remains their responsibility. To do so, many organizations will look to a cloud-based, software-as-a-service (SaaS) backup solution to perform this task.

The State of Office 365 Online SaaS Backup Solutions

Using Office 365 Online SaaS backup solutions hosted in the cloud makes sense for organizations.

As their usage of Office 365 scales up or down, these backup solutions adjust in kind. Should organizations add more Office 365 users, they acquire more backup licenses. Should their number of users decrease, they may decrease their licenses as well.

Organizations will find the Office 365 Online SaaS backup solutions listed here offer a baseline set of features. They back up and recover the core Office 365 components organizations most often use, such as Exchange, OneDrive, and SharePoint. Teams, being a newer Office 365 offering, typically has more limited support. However, over 50 percent of solutions already offer some support for Microsoft Teams with more robust options to protect Teams rapidly emerging.

"All evaluated solutions deliver the foundational features that organizations need to quickly begin protecting their Office 365 data."

All evaluated solutions deliver the foundational features that organizations need to quickly begin protecting their Office 365 data. Consider:

- **Fast and affordable.** Most Office 365 SaaS backup services start at about US\$4 per user per month with an annual contract. Once an organization subscribes and connects its Office 365 tenant to the SaaS backup solution, backups often start automatically. Most solutions, by default, schedule initial and recurring Office 365 backups without administrative intervention.
- **No installation, setup, or maintenance.** Providers host their Office 365 backup solution in either a general-purpose or purpose-built cloud. The solution providers then fix, patch, maintain, and update their software as part of their SaaS backup offering.

1. <http://technalysisresearch.com/downloads/TECHAnalysis%20Research%20Hybrid%20and%20Multi-Cloud%20Study%20Highlights.pdf>. Pg 6. Hybrid and Multi-cloud Study: The New Enterprise Computing Reality. Technalysis Research. Referenced 1/20/2021.
2. <https://office365itpros.com/2020/10/28/teams-115-million-users/>. Referenced 1/19/2021.
3. <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/Investor/earnings/FY-2021-Q1/press-release-webcast>. <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/Investor/earnings/FY-2020-Q3/press-release-webcast>. <https://www.businessofapps.com/data/microsoft-teams-statistics/>. Referenced 1/19/2021.
4. <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/servicesagreement>. Referenced 1/20/2021.

- **Highly available.** Each SaaS backup solution aligns with Office 365 in an important way: it gets hosted in a highly available cloud. The cloud which hosts it does vary. Some host their software in Microsoft Azure. Others use Amazon Web Services (AWS), Google Cloud Platform (GCP), or a purpose-built cloud. Regardless of the solution, each one includes a service level agreement (SLA) of 99.5% or higher.
- **Backup storage and storage costs included.** Many include cloud backup storage and its costs as part of the subscription price. This cost includes managing the placement of backup data in the cloud.
- **Free trial periods.** Organizations may test a solution's backup and recovery capabilities without paying an upfront fee. Many offer some type of trial for a limited time, usually 30 days. The trial may include access to all features for some users; access to some features for all users; or some combination thereof.

“The pricing of these solutions makes them an affordable option for all size organizations.”

Common Features across Office 365 Online SaaS Backup Solutions

DCIG identified fifteen solutions that offer SaaS backup capabilities for Microsoft Office 365 Online. These solutions scale up to handle enterprise backup workloads for Office 365. Conversely, they can just as easily scale down to meet the backup needs of small businesses. Perhaps best of all, the pricing of these solutions makes them an affordable option for all size organizations.

In evaluating available Office 365 Online SaaS backup solutions, DCIG identified the following attributes that these solutions had in common:

1. **Baseline technical support.** All solutions offer a baseline level of technical support that include same or next business day levels of support.
2. **Data encryption.** Organizations should view data encryption as an imperative since these solutions store backup data in various cloud storage locations. All solutions encrypt data at-rest using AES 256-bit encryption. However, not every solution encrypts data in-flight. If using a solution that moves data outside of Azure, verify it encrypts in-flight data.
3. **Universal backup and recovery support for OneDrive files, Exchange mailboxes, and SharePoint documents.** No matter which of the fifteen solutions an organization selects, all back up OneDrive files, Exchange mailboxes, and SharePoint documents. Organizations may also perform granular recoveries for data in these applications.
4. **Perform incremental and full backups.** Every SaaS backup solution first performs a full backup and then performs incremental backups. After the first full backup, some only perform incremental backups forever. Others may annually (on the subscription

Three New Rules for Managing Office 365 Recoveries

The process of backing up and recovering data hosted in Microsoft Office 365 Online differs in a notable way from other applications and data protected in the cloud or on-premises. Organizations do not need to back up and recover the Office 365 application itself. Rather, they may focus solely on backing up and recovering the data stored in Office 365.

While this shift in backup and recovery focus may seem slight, it impacts how organizations manage recoveries of Office 365 data. They should follow three new rules when recovering their Office 365 Online data.

1. The fastest recovery may involve using native Office 365 features. Microsoft places the responsibility for each organization's data on that organization. However, Microsoft does natively offer some data protection capabilities. For instance, deleted emails go to the Deleted Items folder while deleted files end up in the Recycle Bin. Looking to these locations first to perform small scale data recoveries often makes the most sense.

2. Wait for Office 365 to come back online. No one likes to think about Office 365 Online becoming unavailable but it happens. Office 365 runs in the Microsoft Azure cloud. Should an Azure region hosting Office 365 go offline, Office 365 instances go down as well.

To recover, an organization may try to bring up an instance of Office 365 with its SaaS backup provider, in the cloud, or on-premises. However, the best option may be to wait. Simply give Microsoft time to recover Office 365 on its own almost always delivers the best and fastest recovery option.

3. Take steps to avoid large scale data recoveries. Hosting data in Office 365 creates an unusual challenge for organizations. Microsoft limits the number of API calls any application can make to Office 365 during a 24-hour period.

This limitation comes into play should a large amount of Office 365 data become compromised and require recovery. Whether by user error or through ransomware entering an organization, once Office 365 data becomes compromised, large scale recoveries become challenging. Since all SaaS backup applications leverage Microsoft's APIs to restore Office 365 data, it may take days to restore all this data. Identify solutions that monitor for data deletions, exfiltration, and ransomware attacks to prevent large scale data loss.

anniversary date) create a new full backup. They will then do incremental backups until the next anniversary date.

5. Index Office 365 data. When performing recoveries, administrators and users may need to search for the data they need to recover. All these solutions index the protected Office 365 data to facilitate the search operations needed for faster recoveries.

Similarities between the TOP 5 Office 365 Online SaaS Backup Solutions

In addition to supporting the features listed above, all TOP 5 Office 365 Online SaaS backup solutions support the following traits. They include:

- **Monthly billing.** Organizations may want to go forward with using a solution after a 30-day trial. However, they may not want to commit to a full year subscription. All these solutions offer the option to pay monthly.
- **OAuth 2.0 user authentication.** Organizations store some of their most sensitive and critical data in Office 365. The OAuth 2.0 authorization framework helps control the scope of access that SaaS backup solutions have to Office 365 accounts. All TOP 5 SaaS backup solutions support this OAuth 2.0 authentication framework.
- **Restore emails and files to a different location or user.** Individuals move to another company location. They may leave an organization or change positions. In these circumstances, the organization may need to restore that individual's emails and files to a new location or new user. All TOP 5 solutions support these restoration options.
- **Email, phone, and web chat support.** Organizations concerned about technical support need to pay attention to the support options offered by the SaaS backup provider. Organizations may contact technical support for any of the TOP 5 providers via email, phone, and web chat.

All TOP 5 solutions also support the following traits:

- Backup and restore Exchange calendar events, contacts, folders, and individual messages
- Backup and restore OneDrive folders
- Backup SharePoint Libraries and Microsoft Teams attachments and documents
- Proactively restart failed backup jobs
- Restore emails and files to a local device

Differences between the TOP 5 Office 365 Online SaaS Backup Solutions

The TOP 5 solutions differ significantly in how they implement the various features they support. The differences in how they back up and recover Office 365 data may be seen in the following five ways:

- **Anti-ransomware capabilities.** Email attachments and links in messages represent the predominant way that ransomware enters organizations. Each TOP 5 solution takes different steps to mitigate ransomware's impact on organizations should an attack occurs. Four restrict and prohibit any changes to existing or in-place backup files. Two monitor and detect abnormal logins into their solution and alert these attempts. One even monitors for ransomware attacks and, should it detect one, locks down files and automates recoveries.

- **Cloud storage options.** While all TOP 5 solutions use cloud storage to store backup data, they differ in the cloud storage options they support. Four of the TOP 5 solutions support storing data in multiple public clouds. Three of the five offer the option to store backup data in Azure Blob. Only one offers the option to store backup data in an organization's private cloud.
- **Flexibility to schedule Office 365 backups.** Every TOP 5 solution performs backups. However, they vary in the level of control they afford to organizations to schedule backups. For instance, two solutions only perform daily, automated backups. These two give organizations no options to schedule when these backups occur. Two solutions offer the option to initiate a manual backup at any time.
- **Breadth, depth, and quality of Microsoft Teams backups.** Any organization concerned about backing up its Microsoft Teams data should validate each solution's ability to protect Teams. One only backs up two Teams components while another protects all the features evaluated by DCIG. As part of the validation process, verify its ability to back up and recover each Teams component matches your organization's expectations.
- **Availability of technical support.** Technical support often tops the list of features that organizations prioritize. These TOP 5 solutions differ in their responsiveness. Four solutions offer support in an hour or less with three solutions providing immediate technical support (15 minutes or less.) However, one only currently provides same business day support.

TOP 5 Office 365 Online SaaS Backup Solution Profiles

Each of the TOP 5 Office 365 online SaaS backup solution profiles highlights three ways each one seeks to differentiate itself. These differentiators represent some of the best methods that backup solutions offer to back up and recover data in Office 365. Within each solution, enterprises will find distinguishing features that may better meet their respective needs.

Spanning Backup for Office 365

Spanning Backup for Microsoft Office 365 represents one of the early SaaS backup providers of Office 365 Online. Introduced in 2014, Spanning Backup delivers a robust set of mature, proven features to protect Office 365 Online data. Protecting more than 1.4 million users, the following features help distinguish Spanning Backup for Office 365 from competitive solutions:

- **Immutable audit log.** Email represents one of the primary means by which organizations conduct business. As a result, emails and email backups get called upon during internal, legal, or regulatory audits to check business activities. Spanning Backup creates and maintains an immutable audit log of all administrator and user activities. This log may be referenced at any time through the admin dashboard.
- **Dark web monitoring.** Compromised and stolen employee credentials sold on the dark web represent a new threat facing organizations. Known as Account Takeover (ATO) attacks, hackers obtain employee credentials by breaching an organization.

They may then sell these credentials to other cybercriminals who use them to access corporate systems.

The Spanning Dark Web for Office 365 add-on mitigates the possibility of systems being compromised. It constantly compares existing employee credentials against credentials being sold on the dark web. Should it detect employee credentials on the dark web, it alerts administrators to their presence.

- **End user self-service restores.** Organizations may have hundreds, thousands, or even tens of thousands of users with Office 365 online accounts. These users may accidentally delete this data and need it restored. Waiting for an administrator to perform this task may take time and unnecessarily delays the users who need data recovered.

Spanning Backup offers self-service end user restores for Mail, Calendar, Contacts, OneDrive, and OneNote. A user simply needs to navigate to Spanning.com and log into the website using his or her Office 365 credentials. Once logged in, Spanning presents the Mail Restore tab in a format like Outlook online. A user then selects the date and the data to restore. Spanning restores the data to a Restored folder with the date and data selected.

Metallic™ Office 365 Backup

Metallic Office 365 Backup comes with an advantage its competitors may lack. Many of its Office 365 data protection features originated in its parent's product, Commvault Complete Backup and Recovery. While a comparatively new solution in the Online SaaS backup space, Commvault's backing equips Metallic with a robust feature set. Metallic offers the following features that help distinguish it from other Office 365 Online SaaS backup solutions.

- **Comprehensive Teams backup support.** Use of Microsoft Teams in Office 365 climbed dramatically in 2020. Despite its rapid end-user adoption, few Office 365 Online SaaS backup solutions offer robust support for Teams.

Metallic Office 365 Backup stands in contrast to other backup offerings in the Office 365 marketplace. Metallic backs up key features in Teams including channel configurations, Teams memberships, Teams Wiki, and 1:1 conversations, among others. Further, it represented the only solution offering backup support for all the Teams features evaluated by DCIG.

- **Flexible Azure blob cloud storage options.** Organizations typically want a quick and easy default option when initially storing their Office 365 backup data. Then, after a time, they may want the flexibility to store that data in a different location. Metallic delivers on both those requirements.

Organizations may configure Metallic Office 365 Backup to backup data directly to Metallic Cloud Storage on Azure. Further, should organizations need or want to change the Metallic Azure region, they can do so. Organizations may set policies within Metallic for it to place backup data in one or more Azure regions.

- **Thorough set of online documentation and training videos.** Using online, SaaS-based backup solutions changes how organizations access and use these services. They require web-based tools and videos they can quickly and easily reference. Metallic addresses this need. It publishes all its documentation online which includes helpful examples and videos of how to manage it. Metallic augments these online resources with comprehensive technical support options such as chat, email, phone, and web support.

Spin Technology SpinOne for Microsoft Office 365

Spin Technology SpinOne for Microsoft Office 365 represents a next generation of Office 365 online SaaS backup solutions. Like other solutions, it provides the core Office 365 backup features that organizations need and want. However, SpinOne also offers data loss prevention (DLP) and anti-ransomware technologies to minimize the need for recoveries. SpinOne for Microsoft Office 365 offers the following features that help distinguish it from other Office 365 online SaaS backup solutions.

- **Detects and prevents ransomware from encrypting data.** Ransomware represents a continuing and ongoing threat with email representing the primary way that ransomware enters organizations. While Office 365 Online natively offers features to detect and prevent ransomware attacks, ransomware still gets through.

SpinOne accounts for this possibility by offering anti-ransomware technology in its software. Should SpinOne detect a ransomware attack, it protects data by revoking ransomware's access to the data. This technique preserves the data before significant data loss occurs.

- **Choice of multiple cloud storage targets with freedom to change at any time.** Most Office 365 online SaaS backup solutions give its subscribers a choice of one or two cloud storage backup targets. SpinOne provides its subscribers the flexibility to choose between AWS S3, Azure Blob, Google Cloud Platform (GCP), or private storage clouds with multiple storage locations around the world.

Storing Office 365 backup data in these storage clouds comes with no upper storage limits. Further, organizations may switch the cloud they store their backup data in at any time. This gives them the flexibility to align with evolving compliance or recovery requirements.

- **Detects unexpected data loss.** User error and ransomware represent the two biggest threats to data integrity. These two threats become aggravated by API limitations imposed by Microsoft. Microsoft imposes these API limits to ensure the consistent performance of Office 365 online. However, they create unintended consequences by limiting the amount of data an organization can restore in a 24-hour period. This can result in recoveries of large amounts of data taking hours, days, or even weeks to perform.

SpinOne includes DLP technology that monitors for data compromise or loss. If it detects unexpected data loss, SpinOne automatically recovers data corrupted or compromised by user error or ransomware attack. This mitigates the need to recover data while ensuring uninterrupted user access to Office 365 online.

StorageCraft Cloud Backup for Office 365

StorageCraft Cloud Backup for Office 365 represents a more mature Office 365 online SaaS backup offering. Available for multiple years, it supports multiple Office 365 features, multiple clouds for backup storage, and superior support. StorageCraft Cloud Backup for Office 365 offers the following features that help distinguish it from other Office 365 online SaaS backup solutions.

- **Backs up Office 365 data to Amazon S3 data centers.** The location to which an Office 365 online SaaS solution stores backup data may seem like a trivial detail. However, Office 365

Online relies upon and runs in Microsoft Azure which still experiences periodic outages.⁵

During these outages, an organization may lose access to more than production Office 365 applications and data. It may also lose access to its Office 365 backup data if the solution stores backups in Azure.

StorageCraft Cloud Backup for Office 365 accounts for this possibility. By default, it stores backup data in Amazon S3 location. This ensures access to and recoverability of Office 365 online backup data should Azure become unavailable.

Unlimited data retention and storage. By default, Microsoft Office 365 Online allocates about one TB of storage to every Office 365 user.⁶ This total includes the amount of data storage available to each user across all Office 365 applications (Exchange, OneDrive, SharePoint, etc.) This may create hundreds of TBs or even petabytes of backup data depending on the number of users.

StorageCraft Cloud Backup for Office 365 addresses these limitations by including both unlimited retention and unlimited cloud storage in its base price. Competitive solutions may cap data retention time, cloud storage amounts, or both. StorageCraft removes these caps freeing organizations to keep their backup data for however long they need it.

Enterprise level technical support. Too often Office 365 online SaaS backup solutions offer technical support options that organizations will find insufficient. Organizations typically expect near-instant support (under 15 minutes.) Further, they want support options other than sending an email to an address that generates automated responses.

StorageCraft provides the enterprise level of technical supports organizations demand. Organizations may reach out to StorageCraft by phone, email, or on the web. Once they initiate contact, a StorageCraft support representative typically responds immediately or within minutes.

Veritas Technologies SaaS Backup

Veritas SaaS Backup helps round out Veritas' software suite of cloud and on-premises data protection offerings. As an online, SaaS-based offering, any size organization may subscribe to and use it to protect their Office 365 Online data. Veritas SaaS Backup offers the following features that help distinguish it from other Office 365 online SaaS backup solutions.

- **Provides public links for end user restores.** Organizations may have hundreds, thousands, or even tens of thousands of users with Office 365 accounts. These users may inadvertently delete files or folders that require administrative intervention to restore them. Managing every restore request can take administrators lengthy amounts of time.

To accelerate end user restores, Veritas SaaS Backup administrators may generate and share a public link to a backup data snapshot. Once shared with a user, the user clicks on the link, browses to the file location, and restores the file. Administrators may password protect the shared link, put an expiration date on it, or both, for heightened security.

- **Unlimited data retention and storage.** By default, Microsoft Office 365 Online allocates about one TB of storage to every Office 365 user.⁸ This total includes the amount of data storage available to each user across all Office 365 applications (Exchange, OneDrive, SharePoint, etc.) This may create hundreds of TBs or even petabytes of backup data depending on the number of users.

Veritas SaaS Backup addresses these limitations by including both unlimited retention and unlimited cloud storage in its base price. Competitive solutions may cap data retention time, cloud storage amounts, or both. By Veritas removing these caps, organizations may keep all this backup data for however long they need it.

- **Partial snapshots to facilitate recoveries of the latest copy of data.** Individuals often need to restore files from 24 hours ago, not 24 months ago. Unfortunately, storing a snapshot of Office 365 data to backup cloud storage takes time to complete due to the backup's size.

To facilitate recoveries from the backup being performed, Veritas SaaS Backup offers partial snapshots. A partial snapshot grants an organization access to the in-progress backup job. The partial snapshot will not contain all the Office 365 data. However, it may contain the data the user needs to recover.

Office 365 Online SaaS Backup Solutions Inclusion Criteria

- The solution is available as a SaaS offering hosted in a general purpose or purpose-built cloud.
- Organizations subscribe to the service.
- The solution protects and recovers data residing in Microsoft Office 365 Online
- Solution is shipping and available by January 1, 2021
- Information available for DCIG to make an informed, defensible decision

DCIG Disclosures

Vendors of some of the solutions covered in this DCIG TOP 5 report are or have been DCIG clients. This is not to imply that their solution was given preferential treatment in this report. In that vein, there are some important facts to keep in mind when considering the information contained in this TOP 5 report and its merit.

- No vendor paid DCIG any fee to research this topic or arrive at predetermined conclusions.
- DCIG did not guarantee any vendor that its solution would be included in this TOP 5 report.
- DCIG did not imply or guarantee that a specific solution would receive a TOP 5 designation.
- All research is based upon publicly available information, information provided by the vendor, and/or the expertise of those evaluating the information.
- DCIG conducted no hands-on testing to validate how or if the features worked as described.

5. <https://build5nines.com/azure-outages-with-azure-front-door-and-internal-azure-wan-october-6-7-2020/>. Referenced 1/15/2021.

6. <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-365/exchange/compare-microsoft-exchange-online-plans>. Referenced 1/15/2021.

7. Ibid.

- No negative inferences should be drawn against any vendor or solution not covered in this TOP 5 report.
- It is a misuse of this TOP 5 report to compare solutions included in this report against solutions not included in it.

No vendor was privy to how DCIG weighted individual features. In every case the vendor only found out the rankings of its solution after the analysis was complete. To arrive at the TOP 5 solutions included in this report, DCIG went through a seven-step process to come to the most objective conclusions possible.

1. DCIG established which features would be evaluated.
2. The features were grouped into six general categories.
3. DCIG weighted each feature to establish a scoring rubric.
4. DCIG identified solutions that met DCIG's definition for an Office 365 online SaaS backup solution.
5. A DCIG analyst internally examined the feature data for each solution and completed a survey for it based upon the analyst's own knowledge of the solution and publicly available information. Providers were also given the opportunity to complete surveys about their products.
6. DCIG evaluated each solution based on information gathered in its survey.
7. Solutions were ranked using standard scoring techniques. ■

About DCIG

DCIG, the Data Center Intelligence Group, empowers the information technology industry with actionable analysis. DCIG provides informed third-party analysis of various cloud, data protection, and data storage technologies. Learn more at www.dcig.com.