MICROSOFT 365 SAAS
2023-24
DCIG
TOP 5
BACKUP SOLUTIONS FOR MSPS

2023-24 DCIG TOP 5

ACRONIS CYBER PROTECT CLOUD SOLUTION PROFILE

By DCIG Principal Data Protection Analyst, Jerome M Wendt

Acronis Cyber Protect Cloud Solution Profile

SOLUTION

Acronis Cyber Protect Cloud

COMPANY

Acronis
1 Van de Graaff Drive #301
Burlington, MA 01803
(781) 782-9000
acronis.com

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF ACRONIS CYBER PROTECT CLOUD

- Additional levels of cyber protection for Microsoft Teams
- Includes anti-ransomware software and vulnerability assessement services.
- May choose from more than 50 data centers worldwide to store backups.
- Offers its management interface in multiple languages.
- Subscription-based, month-to-month licensing model.

COMMON FEATURES ACROSS ALL MICROSOFT 365 SAAS BACKUP SOLUTIONS FOR MSPS

- Fast and affordable.
- Free trial periods.
- Highly available.
- No installation, setup, or maintenance.
- Protect data hosted in Microsoft Exchange, OneDrive, SharePoint, and Teams.

SOLUTION FEATURES EVALUATED:

- *Anti-ransomware/cyber resilience.*
- *Backup administration and capabilities.*
- *Billing, configuration, and licensing.*
- *Recovery and restores.*
- *Support.*

The Overlooked 99.9% of All US Businesses

Technology providers constantly remain on the lookout for market verticals that may need their products or services. They may even serve market niches with relatively low profiles if they can do so profitably. Yet the fact is most technology providers have had to, by necessity, largely ignore 99.9 percent of all US businesses.

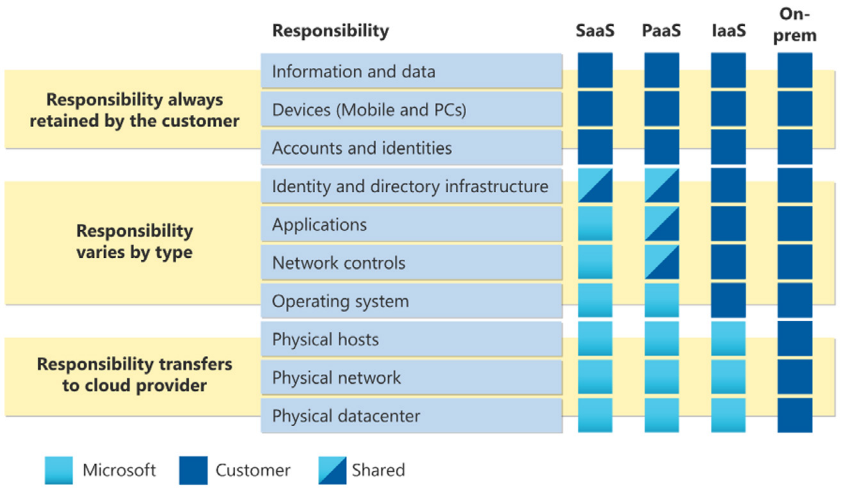
While perhaps shocking, technology providers bypass small businesses, the majority of US businesses, for one simple reason. These 33 million+ small businesses consist of less than 500 employees each according to the US Small Business Administration (SBA).[1] Their small size presents a tactical challenge for technology providers. They struggle to cost-effectively market to and deliver products and services that meet small business needs.

Cloud-based software-as-a-services (SaaS) offerings have changed this paradigm. Available as subscription-based, on-demand services, any small business may access enterprise-caliber technologies at an affordable price. This has led to the availability of thousands of SaaS offerings from which small businesses may choose.

From all these available SaaS applications, over 11 million small businesses have already selected Microsoft 365.[2] All small businesses, regardless of their vertical, store data, share files, send emails, and do video conferences. Microsoft 365 meets these needs with enterprise software and features at a price that small businesses can afford.

Taking Responsibility for Data Stored in Microsoft 365

However, as small businesses rapidly adopt Microsoft 365, many may fail to recognize it creates new challenges for them. They still own and must manage the data and user identity information they create and store in Microsoft 365. This responsibility extends to backing up this data, restoring it, and managing the resulting backups.



	Responsibility	SaaS	PaaS	IaaS	On-prem
Responsibility always retained by the customer	Information and data	■	■	■	■
	Devices (Mobile and PCs)	■	■	■	■
	Accounts and identities	■	■	■	■
Responsibility varies by type	Identity and directory infrastructure	◩	◩	■	■
	Applications	□	◩	■	■
	Network controls	□	◩	■	■
	Operating system	□	□	■	■
Responsibility transfers to cloud provider	Physical hosts	□	□	□	■
	Physical network	□	□	□	■
	Physical datacenter	□	□	□	■

□ Microsoft ■ Customer ◩ Shared

Source: Microsoft[3]

Microsoft may use terms such as data availability and protection when discussing Microsoft 365's features. However, businesses should view these references primarily in the context of high availability (HA) and data security. For instance, Microsoft hosts Microsoft 365 in its highly available Azure data centers. It physically secures these data centers and employs antivirus and fire wall software to protect data stored there from attacks.

Microsoft 365 even offers some limited data protection capabilities. Its Deleted Items and Recycle Bin utilities retain recently deleted data and permit restores of the deleted emails and files.

However, these two utilities do not holistically protect data stored in Microsoft 365. Businesses regardless of their size must assume these responsibilities.

In response to these challenges, the following three major trends have emerged:

1. ***Cloud-based, Microsoft 365 SaaS backup solutions now exist.*** These solutions provide backup and recovery specifically for the SaaS-based version of Microsoft 365.
2. ***Managed service providers, or MSPs, deliver Microsoft 365 SaaS backup solutions and provide the technical expertise businesses often seek.*** These MSPs provide the marketing outreach that the Microsoft 365 SaaS backup solution providers need. They often also provide technical advice and initial and ongoing technical support that businesses need.
3. ***Microsoft 365 SaaS backup solutions specifically tailored for MSPs have emerged.*** In addition to providing comprehensive backup services for Microsoft 365, these solutions include features that meet the specific needs of MSPs.

   However, MSPs need these Microsoft 365 SaaS backup solutions to possess two primary features for them to offer these solutions to their clients.

   First, to effectively manage them, they need the solution to possess multi-tenancy functionality.

   Second, many MSPs also use remote monitoring and management (RMM) or professional services automation (PSA) tools. They use these tools to manage the software they offer to their clients. The Microsoft 365 SaaS backup solution will ideally also integrate with these RMM and PSA tools. MSPs then use these tools to centrally manage their clients' Microsoft 365 backups and charge them for services delivered.

Cloud-based, Microsoft 365 SaaS backup solutions specifically tailored for MSPs have emerged.

The State of Microsoft 365 SaaS Backup Solutions for MSPs

MSPs use and offer Microsoft 365 SaaS backup solutions for multiple reasons. Chief among them, MSPs may quickly subscribe to these offerings. MSPs may then, in turn, introduce this offering to their clients. Once their clients enroll, the backup solution then initiates backups of their data that resides in Microsoft 365.

The MSPs do not need to perform maintenance on the Microsoft 365 SaaS backup solution. The providers themselves handle all the back-of-house administrative tasks. These include performing the SaaS backup software's underlying, ongoing fixes, patches, and updates. Many of these providers also offer the option to manage the cloud storage on which the backups reside. Some even include unlimited cloud storage as part of their subscription price.

The options that Microsoft 365 SaaS backup solution providers offer do, however, vary between products. Some only direct backups to the storage in the provider's cloud. Others give MSPs a choice of storage targets, typically object storage. These options may include using an MSP's on-premises storage solution.

As client usage of Microsoft 365 increases or decreases, the Microsoft 365 SaaS backup solutions dynamically adapt to these changes. This holds true for compute, storage, and even backup software user licenses. For instance, should an MSP need more Microsoft 365 backup solution licenses, the backup solution automatically adds more licenses. Should the number of licensed Microsoft 365 users decrease, the backup solution may also automatically decrease its number of licenses.

Acronis Cyber Protect Cloud Solution Profile

MSPs will also find anti-ransomware, cyber resilience, or both these capabilities in many of these backup solutions. These features include storing backups on immutable object storage, alerting of suspected ransomware attacks, and quarantining infected files in backups.

MSPs will find all the SaaS backup solutions evaluated in this report provide baseline data protection features for Microsoft 365. They protect data in the core Microsoft 365 applications that enterprises often use, such as Exchange, OneDrive, and SharePoint.

Further, all the evaluated solutions now universally protect Teams, one of the newer Microsoft 365 applications. This compares to 2021 when only about 50 percent of the backup solutions evaluated by DCIG protected Microsoft Teams.

All evaluated solutions deliver the foundational features that enterprises need to quickly begin protecting their Microsoft 365 data in the following ways. Consider:

- ***Fast and affordable.*** Microsoft 365 SaaS backup solutions subscription services start at US$4-6 per user per month with an annual contract. Once an MSP connects a client Microsoft 365 tenant to the SaaS backup solution, backups often start automatically. Most solutions, by default, schedule initial and recurring Microsoft 365 backups with minimal or no administrative intervention.
- ***No installation, setup, or maintenance.*** Providers host their Microsoft 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 solution.
- ***Highly available.*** Each SaaS backup solution aligns with Microsoft 365 in an important way: it gets hosted in a highly available cloud. The cloud in which each product gets hosted does vary though most providers that offer Microsoft 365 SaaS backup solutions host them in a purpose-built cloud. Regardless of the provider, they often include a service level agreement (SLA) of 99.5% or higher.
- ***Free trial periods.*** MSP's clients may test a solution's backup and recovery capabilities through a free trial period. Providers typically limit the trial to about 30 days with the terms of each provider's trial period varying. The trial may include access to all features for some users; access to some features for all users; or some combination thereof.

> ***Acronis offers a single price per seat that includes protection of data in all Microsoft 365 applications (Exchange, OneDrive, SharePoint, and Teams.)***

Acronis Cyber Protect Cloud

Upon DCIG's completion of reviewing 14 available Microsoft 365 SaaS backup solutions for MSPs, DCIG ranked Acronis Cyber Protect Cloud as a TOP 5 solution. Acronis primarily focuses on delivering Cyber Protect Cloud to any size service provider around the world. In addition to Microsoft 365 backup, MSPs may utilize this platform for:

- Backup and recovery.
- Disaster recovery.
- Compliance.
- Cybersecurity (EPP/EDR).
- Endpoint management features such as remote management and patch management.

Acronis uses a subscription-based month-to-month licensing model with no long-term commitments. It offers a single price per seat that includes protection of data in all Microsoft 365 applications (Exchange, OneDrive, SharePoint, and Teams.)

Acronis hosts Cyber Protect Cloud in over 50 of its data centers on every continent around the world (except Antarctica.) Each of these data centers have direct links to Microsoft data centers to facilitate fast upload and download speeds. MSPs also have the option to direct backups to their Acronis data center of choice should data sovereignty arise.

By default, Acronis performs Microsoft 365 backups six times per day. It backs this data up to its cloud storage that includes unlimited capacity at a fixed cost. Further, MSPs may configure Acronis to perform backups more or less frequently according to specific client needs. Acronis also offers its interface in multiple languages. This single user interface positions providers with global operations to hire individuals that may manage Cyber Protect Cloud in their native language.

Acronis Cyber Protect Cloud also offers the following three features that further help differentiate it from other Microsoft 365 SaaS backup solutions for MSPs.

1. ***Anti-ransomware software and vulnerability assessment services are part of its Microsoft 365 backup offering.*** Every Acronis MSP partner and its customers that use Acronis Cyber Protect Cloud gain access to this software and service. They may use this software and services across as many workloads as they choose at no additional charge.
2. ***Cybersecurity software includes advanced email protection features.*** Email represents the most common means by which ransomware enters organizations. To help counter this threat, Acronis has partnered with Perception Point and embedded its cybersecurity software into its Microsoft 365 backup offering. While Microsoft itself does analyze emails for malware and ransomware, this software goes much further. Like Microsoft, it also scans emails in real time as they go through the Exchange server. However, Acronis offers signature-based protection and utilizes image-recognition algorithms and machine learning to validate content and detect malicious content in messages.
3. ***Additional levels of cyber protection for Microsoft Teams available.*** The popularity of Teams has made it a new target for hackers to inject their malware and ransomware into organizations. To protect Teams, Acronis offers a prioritized patching service for it. Acronis Cyber Protect Cloud also protects data and user activity in Teams by:

   - Blocking code-injection attempts.
   - Blocking malware hooks that attempt to steal streaming content.
   - Preventing requests to malicious websites.
   - Preventing session ID theft. ■

Acronis offers signature-based protection and utilizes image-recognition algorithms and machine learning to validate content and detect malicious content in Exchange messages.

Sources

[1] Frequently Asked Questions About Small Business, March 2023 (sba.gov). Referenced 7/1/2023.

[2] https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-365/blog/2023/05/01/microsoft-365-innovations-across-ai-payments-and-collaboration-tools-help-small-and-medium-businesses-grow/. Referenced 7/1/2023.

[3] https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/azure/security/fundamentals/shared-responsibility. Referenced 5/2/2023.

About DCIG

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