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Top 6 Reasons for Office 365 Backup

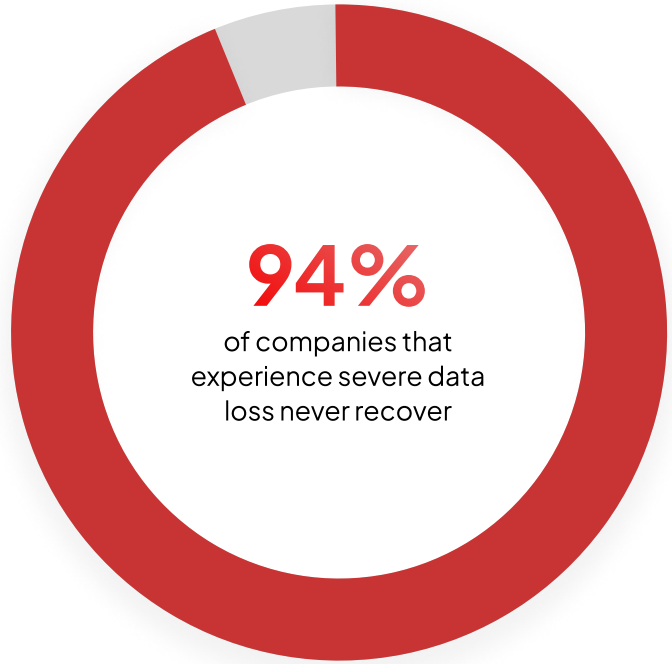
Learn why your company's Office 365 data needs more than just default protection.

June 28, 2024

Introduction

Do you manage your company's Office 365 data? Are you confident that you can retrieve all the essential items? It's easy to assume, "Yes, absolutely," or believe that "Microsoft handles everything." Yet, on further consideration, are you really covered? While Microsoft excellently maintains the Microsoft 365 infrastructure and ensures your service is uninterrupted, the responsibility for safeguarding your data rests on your shoulders. Many users mistakenly believe that Microsoft provides comprehensive backups, a misunderstanding that can lead to significant risks if ignored.

This report highlights the critical importance of implementing a Microsoft 365 backup strategy. It delves into why relying solely on Microsoft might leave gaps in long-term data retention and protection, focusing on essential elements such as Exchange Online, SharePoint Online, OneDrive for Business, and Microsoft Teams



Stats Source: CTI is Now New Era Technology - Managed Services - Networking - Voice

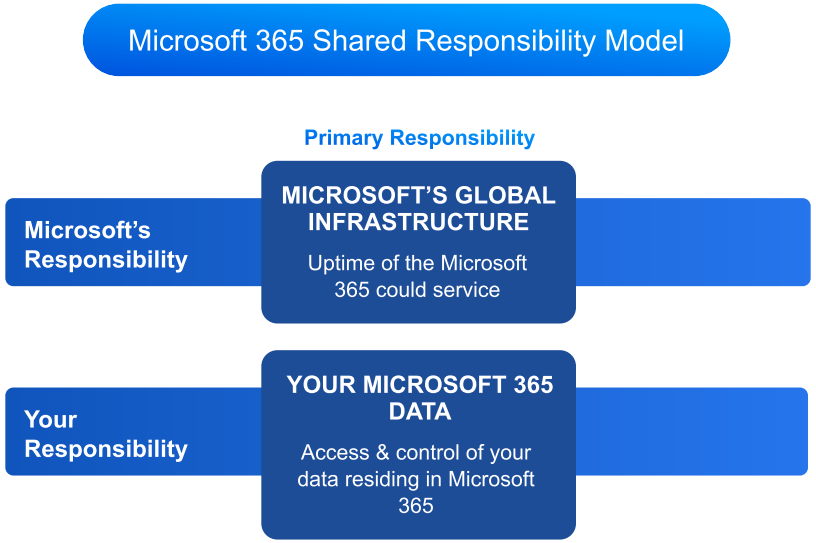
The M365 Backup Misconception

There's a widespread misconception among Microsoft 365 users that Microsoft provides comprehensive backup services that fully protect their data. Many believe that their critical business information, from emails in Exchange Online to documents in SharePoint and OneDrive, is automatically backed up by Microsoft and can be restored at any time to any state.

However, Microsoft's backup policies primarily focus on infrastructure resilience, not on data protection from user errors, malicious attacks, or other data loss incidents. Microsoft provides limited retention for deleted items but emphasizes that the platform operates under a **shared responsibility model**.[1]

Without third-party backup solutions, organizations may find themselves unable to recover lost data.

The next section explores why enhancing your Microsoft 365 with a dedicated backup solution is not just an added security measure — it's a necessity for comprehensive data protection.



"Microsoft ensures platform uptime and infrastructure integrity, the onus of backing up data rests squarely with the users."

1. Microsoft: Malware protection in Microsoft 365

6 Reasons Why Backing Up Office 365 Data is Crucial

Microsoft 365 is a widely used SaaS software, so much so that, Statista reports that **a million companies worldwide use this software!**[2] Office 365 doesn't just stand as a cornerstone for many organizations, it also provides essential applications and ensures a seamless user experience. While Microsoft guarantees application availability and uptime, relying solely on these assurances can leave crucial data vulnerable to various security threats.

M365's recycle bin provides inadequate protection, offering customers 93 days to restore any deleted old file, and an additional 14-day window where Microsoft can still recover the data. After this window, the data is permanently deleted. While you might think that's sufficient time, but the average time from data compromise to discovery **spans approximately 140 days.**[3]

Similarly, experts have identified 6 critical data protection gaps of Microsoft 365. They are:

1. Managing Hybrid Email Deployments and Migrations
2. Legal and Compliance Requirements
3. External Security Threats
4. Internal Security Threats
5. Accidental Deletion
6. Retention Policy Gaps and Confusion

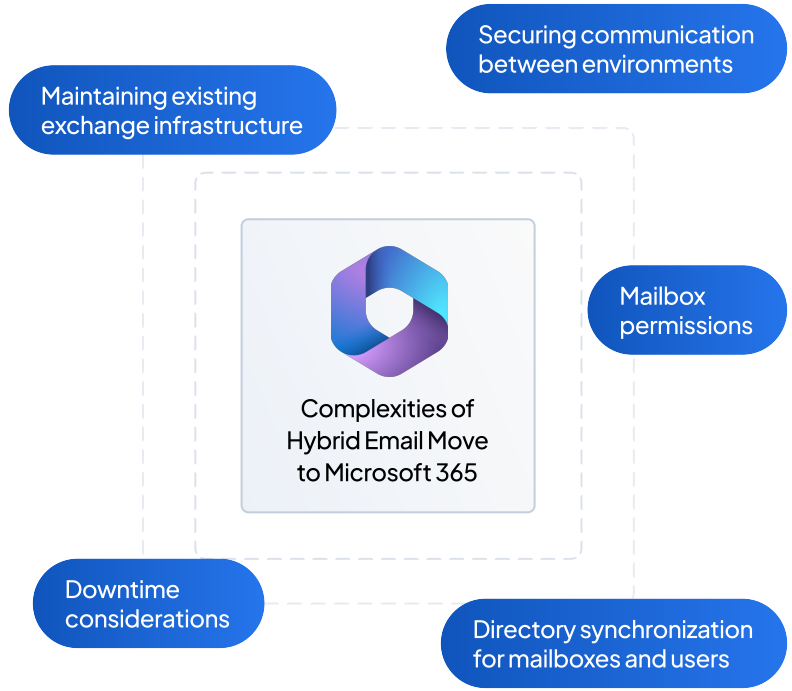
These insights underscore the importance of implementing a dedicated Microsoft 365 backup solution that goes beyond native protections to safeguard against evolving threats and ensure data resilience in the face of challenges.

2. Statista: Office 365 company usage by Country 2024
3. Microsoft: 7 steps to a holistic security strategy

1. Managing Hybrid Email Deployments and Migrations to Microsoft 365

Organizations transitioning to Microsoft 365 often maintain hybrid email environments, bridging on-premises Exchange servers with Microsoft 365 Exchange Online. This approach allows for a gradual migration, ensuring operational continuity and providing flexibility to retain portions of legacy systems for specific needs. However, managing hybrid setups introduces complexities in data management and requires robust backup solutions to ensure seamless **data protection across environments**.[4]

A reliable Microsoft 365 backup solution should seamlessly integrate with hybrid email deployments, treating Exchange data uniformly regardless of source location—whether on-premises or in the cloud. This capability ensures consistent data protection and accessibility during the migration phase and beyond. Moreover, organizations should have the flexibility to choose where their backup data is stored, whether on-premises, in cloud object storage like AWS S3 or Azure Blob, or with a managed service provider, aligning with their data governance and compliance requirements.



4. Microsoft: Microsoft 365 integration with on-premises environments

2. Legal and Compliance Requirements

Organizations across various industries must adhere to stringent legal and compliance regulations regarding data retention, privacy, and security. According to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) guidelines and industry-specific compliance standards, organizations are responsible for implementing adequate data protection measures, including backup solutions that support legal and **regulatory requirements**.[5] Microsoft 365 provides default retention policies, but they may not align with specific industry requirements or regional laws.

A comprehensive backup solution for Microsoft 365 enables organizations to enforce customized retention policies, ensuring compliance with legal mandates and mitigating risks associated with data loss or unauthorized access.

5. GDPR: Security of processing

3. External Security Threats

Cybersecurity threats, such as phishing attacks, ransomware, and malicious third-party applications, pose significant risks to Microsoft 365 data security. The 2023 Data Breach Investigations Report by Verizon highlights phishing as a leading cause of data breaches, underscoring the need for comprehensive backup solutions to mitigate the impact of **external security threats**.[6]

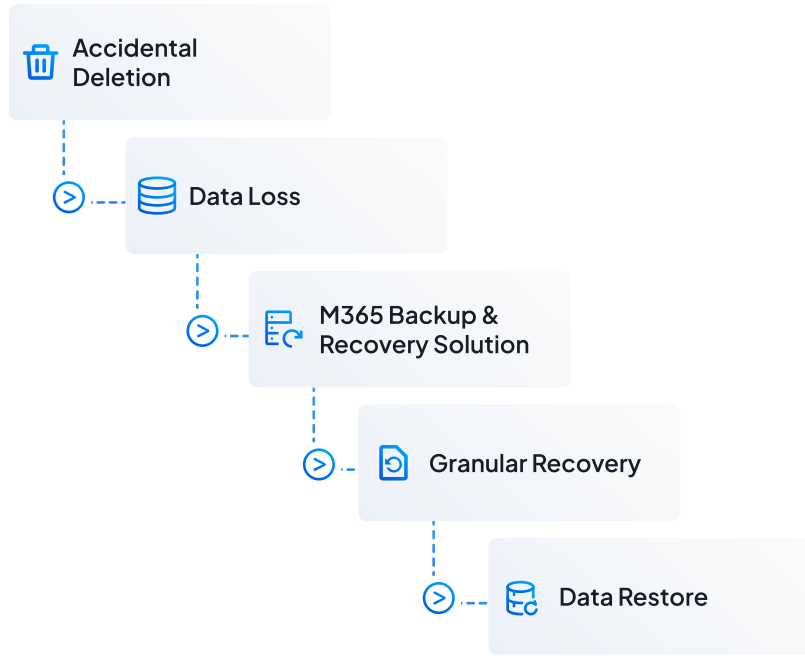
While Microsoft implements robust security measures, including encryption and multifactor authentication, organizations need additional layers of protection through backup solutions. Backup helps safeguard against data breaches, ensuring quick recovery of compromised or deleted data caused by external threats.

6. DBIR Reports: Data Breach Investigations Report

4. Internal Security Threats

Employee errors, accidental deletions, and insider threats contribute to data loss incidents within Microsoft 365 environments. According to the 2023 Insider Threat Report by Istari, 68% of organizations consider accidental data exposure by employees as a **significant concern**.[7]

Despite native features like recycle bins and versioning, restoring specific files or recovering from intentional data tampering requires advanced backup capabilities. A dedicated backup solution enables granular recovery options, empowering organizations to protect against inadvertent data loss and malicious actions by internal users.



7. Istari Global: Insider Threat Report

5. Accidental Deletion

Accidental deletion of critical data, emails, or files is a common occurrence in Microsoft 365 environments. Data Centers reveals that 33% of data loss incidents in SaaS applications are due to **accidental deletion by end-users**.[8]

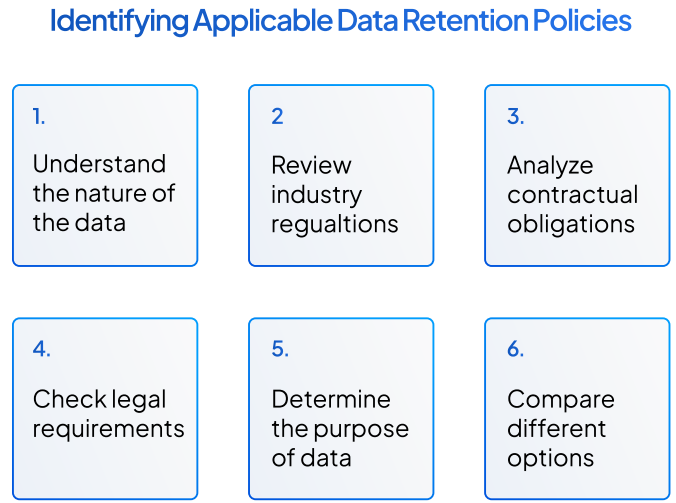
While Microsoft offers recycle bin and retention policies, these may not provide sufficient protection against permanent data loss. Backup solutions with comprehensive retention and recovery capabilities enable swift restoration of accidentally deleted items, minimizing downtime and ensuring continuity of business operations.

8. Datacenters: Understanding and Combatting the Leading Causes of Data Loss in Businesses

6. Retention Policy Gaps and Confusion

Microsoft 365 offers default retention policies that vary across services, such as Exchange Online, SharePoint Online, and OneDrive for Business. However, organizations often encounter challenges in managing and enforcing consistent retention policies tailored to their specific needs. A dedicated backup solution provides flexibility in defining and implementing retention policies, addressing gaps in native retention settings, and ensuring comprehensive data protection and compliance.

Gartner's research on cloud data management strategies emphasizes the importance of aligning retention policies with business requirements to mitigate compliance risks and enhance data governance in **SaaS environments**.[9]



9. Gartner: Insights and Documentation

Conclusion

Now that you have a clearer understanding of the critical vulnerabilities in Microsoft 365 data protection, it's time to take action. By acknowledging these gaps, you're already on the path to enhancing your data security posture.

Deploying Microsoft 365 was a strategic move for your organization, but ensuring comprehensive data protection requires more than just native tools. Consider integrating a robust backup solution like Zmanda Pro to regain complete access and control over your Microsoft 365 data. This approach mitigates the risks associated with data loss and provides peace of mind knowing your critical business information is secure and recoverable.

If you found this report insightful, don't hesitate to share it with your colleagues. Forward this report to start a conversation on enhancing your organization's data protection strategy.

If managing backup solutions internally is a challenge, explore Backup-as-a-Service (BaaS) options offered by Managed Service Providers. Partnering with an expert ensures swift implementation and ongoing management tailored to your specific needs. This flexibility allows you to focus on core business objectives while safeguarding your data effectively.

Zmanda backup for Microsoft 365

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