

Enhancing Office 365: How adding independent email archiving helps you and your customers

14 December 2018 | Authors: James Clayton, Robin Bingeman

Solar Archive is a dedicated email archiving solution for cloud providers. With technology developed by Cryoserver, we enable providers to offer their own branded solution to their customers.

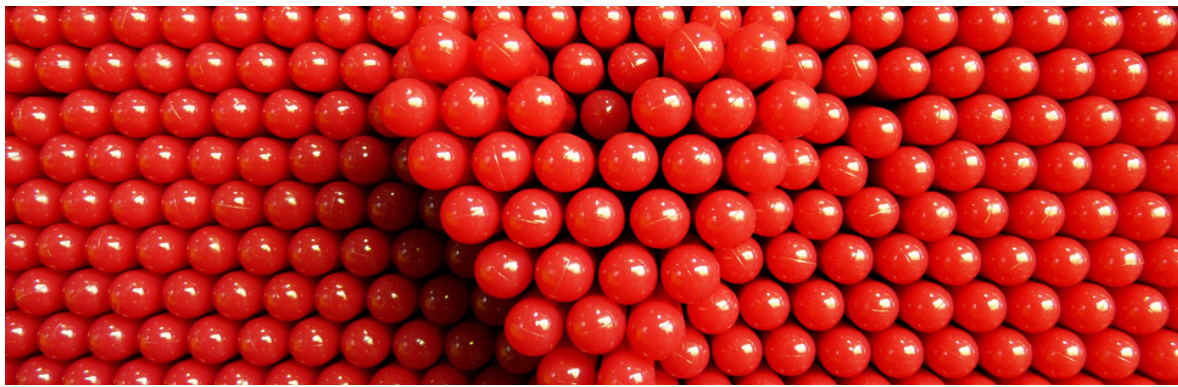
As you may know, Office 365 has its own Archiving function. It's no match for an independent, dedicated solution though. Also, and importantly, it doesn't comply with the regulations affecting business, such as the EU's GDPR and others.

This whitepaper goes through what we see as Office 365's shortcomings and how the

addition of an independent email archiving solution solves them. The paper is informed by our experience with Cryoserver, whose software complements Office 365, with over 1,000 organisations using the software.

If you're a cloud service provider looking for a way to monetize email, what follows will be of interest to you.

We'll explain how, by offering independent, dedicated email archiving you can protect your business, improve Office 365 for customers, and create new revenue for your company.



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“Over 56% of organizations around the world now have Office 365. The figure is as high as 65% across EMEA. Meanwhile, adoption continues to grow at an impressive rate, with over 50,000 migrations a month globally.”

*Cloud Adoption 2018
Bitglass*

Introduction

Office 365 and your business

Since Microsoft introduced Office 365 in 2011, the application has proved its worth as a valuable tool. It has transformed business for countless organisations; enabled employees to work effectively anywhere; helped them collaborate more easily; and kept them always up to date with the latest version of software.

Over 56% of organizations around the world now have Office 365.¹ The figure is as high as 65% across EMEA. Meanwhile, adoption continues to grow at an impressive rate, with over 50,000 migrations a month globally.

While your customers probably appreciate Office 365, you may regret how it's taken email hosting revenue away from you. Or how Microsoft has made it easier for customers to move from you to another cloud provider for anti-virus and anti-spam services.

You may wonder how you can fill that hole in your business and hold on to your customers. To find a solution, look more closely at Office 365. You'll see that the service isn't perfect at everything.

You have the opportunity to make Office 365 better by providing something it lacks – and something your customers need: a compliant email archiving solution. Such a service would become an integral part of your offering, helping you to retain customers.

We'll explore how that solution enhances Office 365 shortly. First, let's consider the subject of backing up and your responsibilities regarding customer data. You'll discover that an independent email archiving solution will not only protect your customers' businesses, but also help to safeguard yours.

Footnotes:
1 Cloud Adoption 2018 War report
by Bitglass



“Microsoft is not liable for any disruption or loss you may suffer as a result. In the event of an outage, you may not be able to retrieve Your Content or Data that you’ve stored.”

Microsoft Service Agreement

Your liabilities with Microsoft’s SLA

Consider your customers using Office 365. If for any reason, some of their data is lost, did you know that Microsoft is not necessarily responsible?

To quote the Microsoft Services Agreement (part 6b):

“We strive to keep the Services up and running; however, all online services suffer occasional disruptions and outages, and Microsoft is not liable for any disruption or loss you may suffer as a result. In the event of an outage, you may not be able to retrieve Your Content or Data that you’ve stored. We recommend that you regularly backup Your Content and Data that you store on the Services or store using Third-Party Apps and Services.²

Now a little story from Datto Inc, a cybersecurity and data backup company. One of its cloud provider-partners had

started a migration from an on-premise Exchange to Office 365. Unfortunately, there was an outage at the Microsoft data centre the partner was using. All the data was lost. Even though Microsoft had guaranteed 99.99% uptime in the application, the cloud provider was caught in that unlucky 0.01%.

Imagine being that provider and having to tell your customer what had happened.

So, how common are outages?

“To be clear, Office 365 outages happen all the time,” says Petri IT knowledgebase. It adds that the vast majority of incidents are transient, last a short time and affect a relatively small number of tenants.

Footnotes:

² <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/servicesagreement/>



“Office 365 outages have occurred at least once a month for the past few years. What’s more, they can last for several days.”

Down Detector

“60% of a business’s data is stored in email. Much of that is business-critical and found nowhere else.”

IDC

Office 365 outages and backing up

According to downdetector.com, outages have occurred at least once a month for the past few years. What’s more, they can last for several days.

Knowing this, and the fact that data losses do happen, you can see the importance of protecting the data in your customers’ emails. If data is deleted, whether accidentally or maliciously, Microsoft is not responsible for recovering it.

- Business-critical data in emails

According to IDC, 60% of a business’s data is stored in email. Much of that is business-critical and found nowhere else. As your customer’s cloud provider, it’s up to you to protect the content in your client’s Office 365.

- Does Office 365 truly backup?

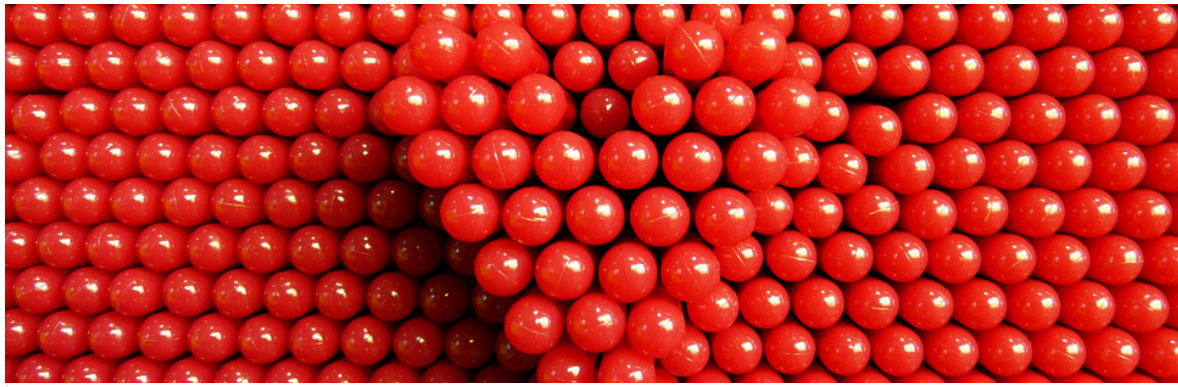
Microsoft provide you with redundancy, deleted item retention policies, legal hold, eDiscovery, search and Data Loss Prevention. While these add some value to their service, they really aren’t built for the purpose of providing true active, real-time archive.

- The 3-2-1 backup rule

Organisations that are serious about protecting their data follow the 3-2-1 backup rule – as recommended by the United States Government.³ It says, make at least 3 copies, 2 of them local but on different mediums/devices, and at least one of them offsite.

Footnotes:

³ https://www.us-cert.gov/sites/default/files/publications/data_backup_options.pdf



If a customer's data is lost, the customer won't go to Microsoft; they'll come to you.

Other Office 365 email issues

Is Microsoft backing up your customers' data like that? No; they're not storing the data in a secure, independent location, so they're actually not protecting that data from a number of risks.

If a customer's data is lost, the customer won't go to Microsoft; they'll come to you.

- Protect your business

Clearly, it's a good idea not to have all your eggs in one basket with Microsoft. Fortunately, there is a simple way to protect your customers' emails and therefore your own business: with an independent email archiving solution. It provides continuous real-time backup, storing all your customers' emails securely, outside Office 365, so that if there is an outage, you're covered. It's a safety net that reduces risk.

Having considered the importance of protecting emails and preventing data loss in Office 365, let's take a look at other email-related issues affecting your customers.

While the service has a lot to recommend it, one area where it leaves much to be desired is archiving, which is an essential service for most modern organisations.

- » As mentioned, Office 365 doesn't archive externally, so there's an increased risk of data loss.

- » It isn't compliant with regulations such as Sarbanes-Oxley (U.S.), PCI and SEC (U.S.) and GDPR (EU)

- » It isn't tamper-proof archiving; in fact, altering an email, either accidentally or maliciously, is easy.



Other Office 365 Email issues

» It allows users to copy emails into .pst files, which deteriorate over time. As Microsoft itself says: “[.pst files] are not meant to be a long-term, continuous-use method of storing messages”

» Outlook offers limited search functionality

» It's slow in retrieving emails when users search for them – a big impediment to eDiscovery investigations. There's little point in archiving emails if you can't find them again quickly and easily when you need them. Whilst the standard Outlook interface does support Boolean searching, it's not intuitive, which creates issues for users finding mail, especially those in non-technical roles

Apart from archiving, Office 365's email system presents other problems as well:

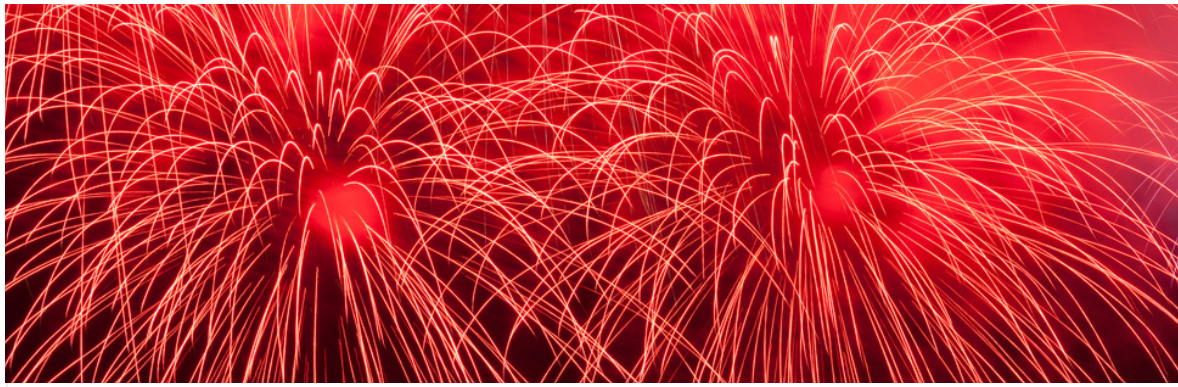
» Migrating to Office 365 can be

challenging. In particular, getting legacy email into the cloud so that users can see their current and historical email, and allowing the on-premise Exchange server to be decommissioned. As mentioned in the story above, there's also the risk of data loss

» When an Office 365 outage happens, end-users are unable to send and receive emails, which can cause great disruption to a business

» When employees leave an organisation, you and your customer have to continue paying for their mailboxes, in order to keep them live so that they are searchable and compliant.

Clearly, there are many issues with Office 365's email and archiving capabilities. Now let's look at how you can address all of them.



With an independent archiving solution your customers will have a truly active archive: one that not only stores all emails compliantly, but also a valuable business tool for end-users in their daily work.

Enhancing Office 365 with independent email archiving

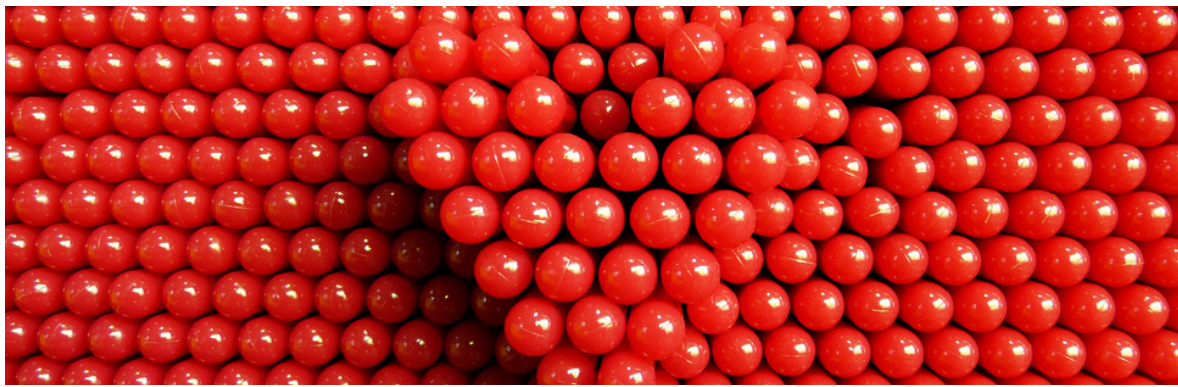
A dedicated email archiving solution complements Office 365, making up for the deficiencies listed above. In addition to backing up emails externally, and thereby reducing risk of data loss:

- » it acts as a “black box flight recorder” for email, providing an evidential, tamper-proof archive; the version of an archived email is identical to the one sent or received
- » it stores emails securely to comply with industry and government regulations such as Sarbanes-Oxley (U.S.), PCI and SEC (U.S.) and GDPR (EU)
- » offers role-based access; for example, a Data Protection Officer would have more privileges than an average user
- » it enables deletion of personal identifiable information when required under a GDPR (EU)

“right-to-be-forgotten” request

- » it eliminates the need for .pst files
- » it speeds up searches and information retrieval, for example in eDiscovery investigations or SAR or FOI requests; end-users have access to a search interface which can show hundreds of results in a second or two
- » it enables searches at a much more granular level than Outlook does; users can “find the needle in the haystack”
- » it turns Outlook into a place where users can find any email they need quickly

With an independent archiving solution your customers will have a truly active archive: one that not only stores all emails compliantly, but also a valuable business tool for end-users in their daily work.



Email archiving solution makes office 365 migration much easier and quicker

Other benefits for your customers (and you)

- Making migration easier

Say a customer wants to move from an on-premise Exchange server to Office 365. They may have 10 years' worth of emails in their staff's mailboxes to take with them. That could seriously slow things down.

An independent email archiving solution would help you avoid that problem so that the migration goes quicker. You could import all 10 years of terabytes into the archive and then only move the emails from the last couple of years into Office 365. This would substantially reduce the amount of work you needed to do.

Or, if you wanted all 10 years of emails in Office 365, the independent solution would enable you to remove all attachments, archive them, and insert hyperlinks into the emails. This, too, would speed up your

migration.

Archiving independently of Office 365 provides a simple and effective way to manage a customer's move to the cloud, without disrupting email access for users.

- Do more migration, increase revenue

Using archiving as described above is a simple and effective way to manage your customer's move to the cloud, without disrupting email access for users. It allows you to complete more migrations quicker, so that you can make more revenue.

- Business continuity during outages

When Office 365 outages occur, if a customer has a solution like Solar Archive, their employees can continue to receive and reply



Email archiving solution helps save money and storage space in Office 365

Other benefits for your customers (and you)

to emails. Later, when Office 365 comes back online, the end-users will have the correspondence from the period the service was down in their inbox.

- Save money: pay only for active mailboxes

Microsoft charges you for all mailboxes in a customer's organisation, including those of employees who've left.

When you have an independent email archiving solution though, you only need to pay for active mailboxes – that is, those addresses sending and receiving at least 20 emails a month. This gives you a saving you can pass on to your customers.

- Move to a less-expensive pricing plan

Another benefit of having a separate archiving service working

with Office 365's email is that you don't need Office 365's Archiving functionality.

That means you can move from the E3 pricing plan to the considerably less expensive E1 plan. The latter has everything that E3 does except its Archiving.⁴

This is a second way to save money for your and customers' businesses.

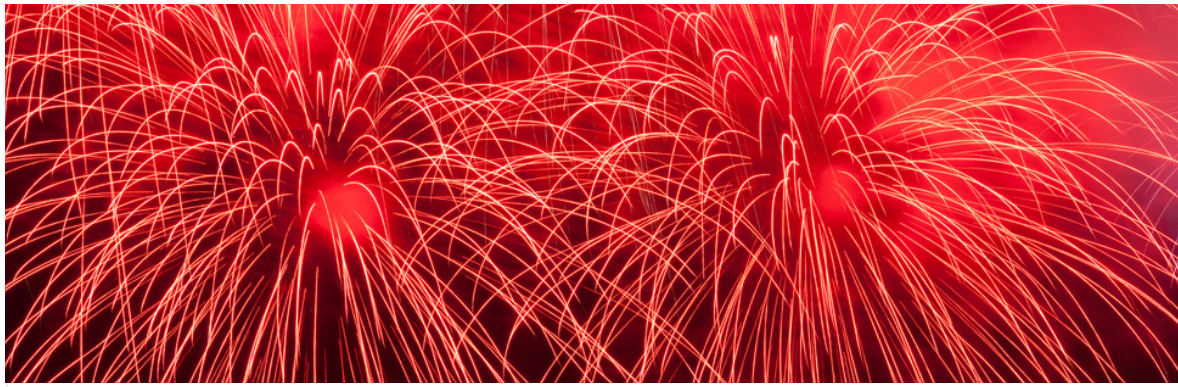
- Free up storage

The solution keeps a copy of every email sent and received by a customer's organisation and is independent from their mail server. So, the customer can safely clear space on their server, knowing that any data they delete is securely backed up and accessible via the archiving software. For example, you can reduce storage on Exchange from 10TB to 1TB.

Footnotes:

⁴ <https://products.office.com/en-gb/business/compare-more-office-365-for-business-plans>





Once email archiving solution is in place, and it is safeguarding years of their emails, customers will be inclined to stick with you.

Other benefits for your customers (and you)

In addition to all of the above benefits, an independent email archiving solution will work with Office 365 to:

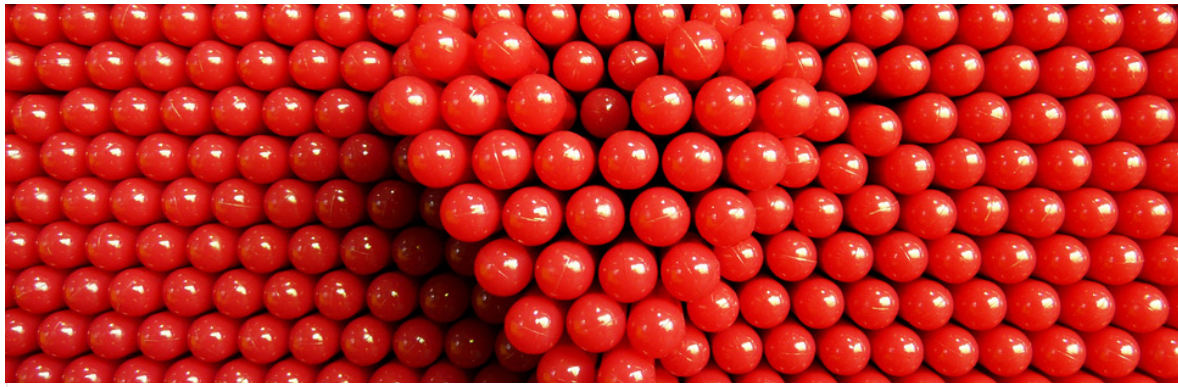
- » boost productivity by saving end-users time
- » improve the user experience, by making Outlook more effective at finding what they need, and removing the hassle of needing to call their IT helpdesk for assistance in retrieving archived emails (users can do it themselves)

● Retain customers

Email is crucial to your customers' businesses. They want and, for compliance purposes, need their emails to be stored securely. They also need quick access to the valuable data contained in them. Therefore, they are likely to appreciate the offer of an independent, compliant archiving

solution – especially when they see it will enhance their Office 365 service.

Once the solution is in place, and it is safeguarding years of their emails, customers will be inclined to stick with you. It would cost them a lot of money to move ten terabytes worth of data, and it's actually cheaper for them to carry on subscribing to your services.



A white label email archiving solution like Solar Archive allows you to rebrand and immediately add to the value of your offering.

Cryoserver's experience

To appreciate the hold an independent email archiving solution can have on customers, consider Cryoserver. Its technology has retained 93% of its customers over the company's 15 years. Many of its contracts have lasted more than 10 years.

Cryoserver has shared some of its customers' feedback with us. One customer says:

"The 365 search feature isn't great, what we did like about Cryoserver is the ability to search any email from any time from any person in a matter of seconds . . . Cryoserver and Office 365 work well together."

Another customer says: "When we started looking at Office 365 I was not massively impressed with the archiving and retrieval process . . ."

"Cryoserver has fitted in nicely because it's filled the void in our Office 365 offering. It's given us a greater level of control over who can access which email box."

Cryoserver's solution has improved Office 365 for over 1,000 organisations.

Host yourself and increase revenue

You can help your business and your customers reap all the benefits described above by hosting an email archiving solution yourself. A white label one like Solar Archive allows you to rebrand and immediately add to the value of your offering. In addition to boosting your average revenue per user (ARPU), it will also raise the lifetime value of your customers by increasing recurring revenue.



Conclusion

It's clear that cloud providers have the opportunity to enhance Office 365 by providing an independent email archiving solution that complements Microsoft's service.

Not only will such a solution protect their and customers' businesses against data loss. It will also give customers a much more effective archiving service than they're currently getting from Office 365 Archiving – and one that's compliant and boosts employee productivity.

For your existing or prospective customers who are planning to migrate, the added service will make their migration easier and quicker.

With migrations now numbering over 50,000 a month, adding this solution is certainly a powerful way for cloud providers to monetize their email service and retain customers.

Request a demo, enquire about our partnership margins or get in touch to learn more about Solar archive at info@solar-archive.com

