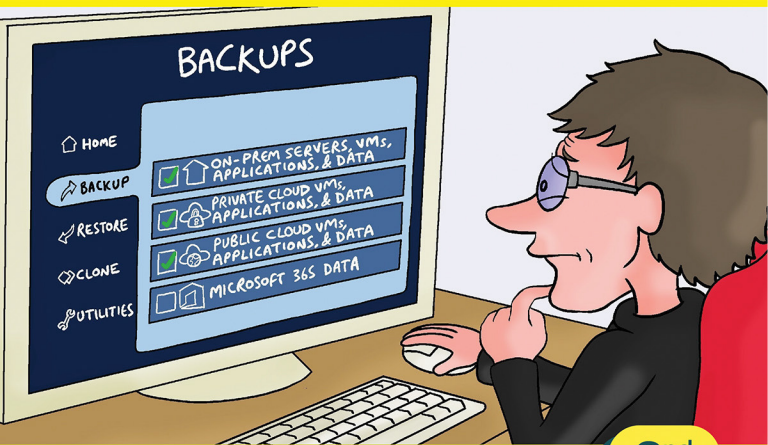




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Conversational Microsoft 365 BaaS for Customers

Nick Cavalancia (Microsoft MVP)



Learn about:

- Why BaaS for Microsoft 365 makes sense for your organization
- Why use an MSP offering a Microsoft 365 BaaS solution to protect your data

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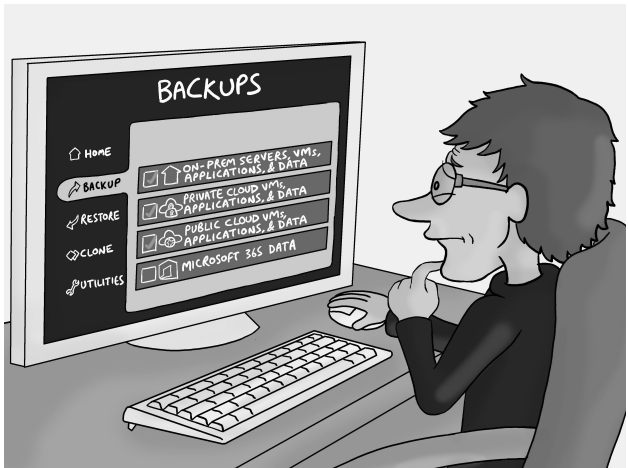


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by Nick Cavalancia

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The “Conversational” Method

We have two objectives when we create a “Conversational” book. First, to make sure it’s written in a conversational tone so that it’s fun and easy to read. Second, to make sure you, the reader, can immediately take what you read and include it into your own conversations (personal or business-focused) with confidence.

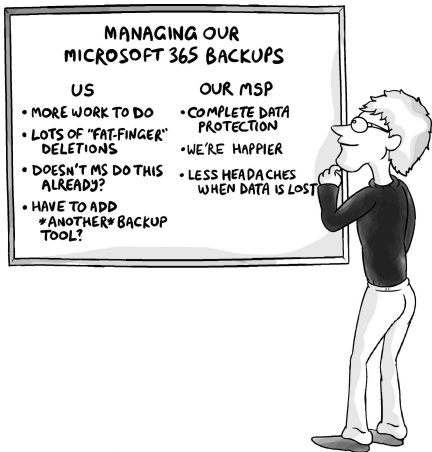
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We infuse humor and insight into our books through both cartoons and light banter from the author. When you see one of these boxes it’s the author stepping outside the dialog to speak directly to you. It might be an anecdote; it might be a personal experience.



Within these boxes I can share just about anything on the subject at hand. Read 'em!

Why Backup Microsoft 365?



In the last few years, we've all seen business continuity become a mainstream concern for SMB organizations. The expectation for your business (even the small ones!) is now to be *always* available and accessible for customers, partners, contractors and employees.

One of the factors that makes this a challenge is the mix of resources that make up your business operations: some reside on-premises within the four walls of your office, some in a more formal datacenter, some in a private or public cloud, and some via the use of cloud-based applications. And every piece of your operations needs to be protected and made recoverable using backups.

Many managed IT service providers (MSPs) already offer *Backup-as-a-Service* (BaaS) to their customers – where the backup and recovery of critical infrastructure, applications, data, and systems is managed by the MSP – with the purpose and goal of putting the entirety of your computing environment back into an operational state.

Backups of your on-premises infrastructure, applications, and data is fundamental and relatively easy for the MSP to address. It's also still pretty cut and dry when the cloud is used to host your servers and applications, because your MSP is managing the backing up of a virtual environment hosted by a cloud provider.

But, what about when it comes to Microsoft 365? I'm going to guess most of you have your business relying on Microsoft 365 and (at a minimum) are using Exchange Online, if not also SharePoint, One Drive for Business, or even Teams.

Given that you are dependent on Microsoft 365 to keep the business running, shouldn't you include Microsoft 365 as part of the backups you already have your MSP managing?



Some of you might not even be engaged with an MSP yet to handle your backups. But if you are utilizing Microsoft 365, you should consider a BaaS service that includes Microsoft 365. Keep reading, as the remainder of this e-book is very applicable to you as well.

Why take advantage of Microsoft 365 BaaS?

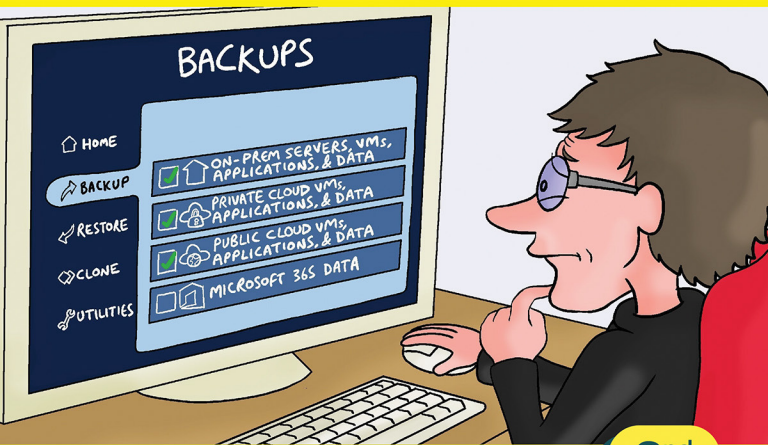
With Microsoft 365 representing some part of your business operations, it's necessary for you to extend your backups to include this critical data set.



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Extending (or initially taking advantage of) BaaS to protect your Microsoft 365 investment makes sense from a *business* perspective. Let's cover each of these aspects of the discussion.

BaaS for Microsoft 365 makes business sense

Handing the responsibility of backing up your Microsoft 365 data – in addition to the rest of your network environment – is a sound decision from a few business perspectives:

- 1) **Microsoft 365 has become your office** – I assume most of you reading this either already have or are looking to run your business operations in the cloud; and that includes all of your communication/collaboration, making Microsoft 365 that much more critical to the availability of your business.
- 2) **Minimized operational risk** – I'm going to assume you already understand what the impact would be if you lost some or all of your business-critical data. You should, then, equally realize the risk involved in utilizing Microsoft

365 applications without having the data backed up. By taking advantage of BaaS for Microsoft 365, you reduce the risk of losing operational data that you rely on every day.

3) **Insider threats are alive and well** – Malicious insiders are still responsible for 26% of incidents¹, where data deletion and/or manipulation can be in order.

4) **Cybercriminals LOVE Microsoft 365** – Usernames and their passwords of online services are the number one target of phishing attacks, with one-fifth of attacks impersonating Microsoft² (meaning, the bad guys are attempting to gain access to your user's Microsoft 365 account). Compromising a user's credentials enables their account to be hijacked and the compromised user to be impersonated

¹ Ponemon, *Cost of Insider Threats Report* (2022)

² Abnormal Security, *H2 Email Threat Report* (2022)

as part of Business Email Compromise. There's also misuse of OneDrive and SharePoint by cybercriminals to host malicious content to be used in other attacks. Lastly, emails, chats, files, lists and more can all be modified for malicious purposes, requiring they be returned to a known-secure state.

- 5) **Deleting a user is (eventually) permanent** – Once one of your users is deleted, Microsoft generally holds onto their data for 30 days— and then it's gone forever.
- 6) **Legal and compliance requirements** – Just because the data is hosted in the cloud doesn't mean it's not subject to local, state and federal regulations. Depending on where your business is located and the type of industry you are in, there may be data and service availability requirements that may influence backup and recovery needs – even when the data resides in the Microsoft cloud.

- 7) **Data retention only goes so far** – Microsoft, at best, only covers 93 days of “data retention time” across its major services, meaning you can “undelete” something within that timeframe, depending on the Microsoft service where the data resides. Should data be needed from last quarter, or last year, backups are the only option.
- 8) **Microsoft isn’t backing it up** – Microsoft makes it clear in their Service Agreement that everything your business places onto the Microsoft 365 environment belongs to the you and it is *not* Microsoft’s responsibility to maintain it.



To make it even more clear, Microsoft places the following statement into their Service Agreement (emphasis is mine):

*“We don’t claim ownership of Your Content. Your Content remains Your Content **and you are responsible for it.**”*

- 9) **Neither are you** – Assuming that the above is news to you, it's probably safe to say you don't know where to start with backups, making it necessary to put the protection of this critical data set of yours to a trusted advisor is a good idea.

OK, so it makes sense from a business perspective, but even with Microsoft not technically backing it up, is it technically necessary for MSPs to add Microsoft 365 to BaaS offerings?

Utilizing Microsoft 365 BaaS

There are plenty of solutions that exist today that assist in the backing up and recovering of Microsoft 365 data. The real issue is the continual management of the backup and recovery around your Microsoft 365 data. BaaS that includes Microsoft 365 takes the burden of the ongoing work of protecting your data and puts it squarely into the hands of your trusted MSP.

Here's some goals you should be able to accomplish with Microsoft 365 BaaS.

Backup from and to the cloud

There's a reason you're leveraging the cloud; you don't want the cost of owning, supporting and maintaining infrastructure, systems, applications, etc. So, it makes sense that the BaaS you choose should equally leverage the cloud, with backup and recovery also managed centrally from the cloud.

Additionally, the backups created should be stored with a cloud provider that meets cost, retention, performance and legal requirements.

Recover to more than just Microsoft 365

While there's likely no plans whatsoever to leave Microsoft 365 in favor of, say, another cloud vendor or perhaps moving back on-premises, it's still a possibility you may need to address one day. The larger picture here is to reserve the ability to avoid vendor lock-in – even when we're talking about Microsoft – and be able to recover the data somewhere other than Microsoft 365.

See BaaS as an extension of your business

Whether you have internal IT staff or not, the place where BaaS best fits is when you recognize your own lack of expertise and experience in backup and recovery efforts – be it Microsoft 365, other cloud applications and data, or all things that reside on-premises. The right MSP realizes this and has this service offered laser focused on keeping your business operational with as little interruption as possible.

The Big Takeaways

You've already embraced outsourcing much of your technology, which has given rise to the need for MSPs to address the daily tasks of managing and maintaining this new investment of yours. The reliance on Microsoft 365 has created a necessity for you to ensure your data is protected in the same "hands-off" way you use Microsoft 365 itself.

I do want to say, this isn't just important; it's mandatory, as you *will* face a data loss scenario at some point.

Once you begin down the path of taking advantage of Microsoft 365 BaaS, you will be able to work towards a solution that doesn't just perform backup and recovery, but one that truly empowers your business through protecting your investment in Microsoft 365.

As your company increasingly relies on Microsoft 365, MSPs provide a unique opportunity to help you protect your data in the same “hands-off” way you use Microsoft 365 itself. This eBook discusses why taking advantage of a BaaS for Microsoft 365 offering via an MSP is a great option.



About Nick Cavalancia

Nick Cavalancia is a 4-time Microsoft Cloud and Datacenter MVP, has 30 years of SMB and enterprise IT experience, is an accomplished consultant, speaker, trainer, writer, and columnist.



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