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Six Costly Microsoft Office 365 Data Protection Gaps

For over 500,000 businesses worldwide, it's hard to imagine business as usual without Microsoft Office 365 — anywhere, anytime access to applications means you can work non-stop. That is until you can't.

Users often forget that in the cloud you are renting a service from providers, which means you agreed to their terms. In the case of Microsoft, the company commits to ensuring the building doesn't fall down and the lights stay on — or delivering high performance, access and uptime for Office 365 applications.

> **But Microsoft does not take responsibility for what's inside Office 365 — your data.**

To prevent data loss, ensure business continuity and avoid compliance penalties, you need to be aware that Microsoft does not include formal data protection for Office 365, so there might be gaps in your expectations and the reality.

ACCIDENTAL DELETION ISSUES

29% of data loss is due to human error

Source: CSO

RETENTION POLICY ISSUES

80% of companies have lost data in the cloud

Source: Osterman Research

INSIDER SECURITY THREATS

90% of organizations are vulnerable to insider threats

Source: Insider Threat Report

EXTERNAL SECURITY THREATS

$20 billion in global ransomware damages are projected by 2021

Source: Cyber Security Ventures

MIGRATION FROM ON-PREM TO CLOUD

75% of CXOs say managing privacy and data protection regulations in the cloud is complex

Source: CXO Today

LEGAL AND COMPLIANCE ISSUES

$57 million is the largest GDPR penalty issued to date (Google)

Source: Fortune.com

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Here are six common data threats Office 365 business customers can face:

1. ACCIDENTAL DELETION ISSUES

With Microsoft Office 365, administrators and employees alike routinely delete Exchange Online emails, attachments and files, Office 365 user profiles, OneDrive for Business files, and SharePoint Online content. Should an item need to be recovered, the age of the resource may render that impossible: Older data may be hard-deleted and unrecoverable while more recent deletions of newer resources may be found in the Recycle Bin or Recoverable Items folder.

2. RETENTION POLICY ISSUES

It's up to customers to manage retention policies, which can be time consuming and error-prone: You may think you've set the right parameters to retain data, but changing or misaligned priorities in Office 365 data retention policies can result in data being hard-deleted. Be aware, if for whatever reason a hard-deletion occurs due to aging out of the existing retention policy, Microsoft has no ability to recover the deleted resource.

3. INSIDER SECURITY THREATS

Microsoft Office 365 resources also require protection from malicious alteration or data destruction by disgruntled employees, contractors or partners. Microsoft does not guard against these foes — it has no way of knowing if deletion was accidental, malicious or intentional.

4. EXTERNAL SECURITY THREATS

Microsoft has only limited protections against malware attacks like ransomware (which encrypts user data and holds it hostage until an online ransom is paid) and a limited ability to restore malware-encrypted or -altered files. That means Microsoft Office 365 data is vulnerable to destruction or alteration by a variety of threats mounted by hackers, cybercriminals or hostile state actors.

5. MIGRATION FROM ON-PREM TO CLOUD

Microsoft does not address data loss issues during premises-based Microsoft Office to cloud-based Office 365 migration. The two backup solutions are often incompatible, making it impossible to restore legacy data into the new environment. Meanwhile, few third-party data protection solutions integrate backup functionality for Office and Office 365: they usually protect one or the other, but not both.

6. LEGAL AND COMPLIANCE ISSUES

Compliance requirements (e.g. GDPR, HIPPA) and legal issues can exacerbate costs related to any data loss incident. Without timely access to data, businesses are exposed to government or industry-specific regulatory fines, legal penalties, revenue and stock price hits, plus damage to company brand and customer trust.

The Bottom Line

The reality is that emails, attachments, and shared files stored in Office 365 are not protected from the most common and serious data loss issues, ranging from simple accidental deletions to sophisticated malware attacks. This means that Office 365 data loss is an unhappy surprise waiting to happen — with incredibly high stakes. Failure to defend Office 365 data can be career-limiting.

To learn more about easy-to-use, agentless cloud backup for Office 365, speak to CompNow today.
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