DCIG 2020-21 TOP 5 Azure Cloud Backup Solutions Report Now Available

DCIG is pleased to announce the immediate availability of its inaugural TOP 5 report on Microsoft Azure Cloud Backup Solutions. This TOP 5 report provides organizations guidance on the best backup solutions for backing up and recovering applications and data hosted in the Microsoft Azure cloud.

Microsoft Azure Going Neck and Neck with AWS

For years Amazon Web Services (AWS) seemed to possess an almost insurmountable lead in the public cloud infrastructure-as-a-service (IaaS) provider market. Then, Microsoft Azure made some changes to its public cloud offerings. Led by its SaaS-based Office 365 and IaaS-based Azure offerings, Microsoft closed the gap to now go neck and neck with AWS. Consider:

- Microsoft Office 365 is the cloud software-as-a-service (SaaS) most used by enterprises
- 69 percent of enterprises currently use Azure compared to 76 percent of them using AWS
- 63 percent of all size organizations use Azure compared to 76 percent of them using AWS
- Microsoft Azure generated about $8 billion in revenue in 2019, second only to AWS

Since 93 percent of enterprises already have a multi-cloud strategy, this bodes well for Microsoft Azure’s continued adoption and growth. Microsoft Azure offers all size...
organizations a viable public cloud choice with some of the best options available to host Microsoft applications.

Microsoft Azure provides the core IaaS services that many enterprises initially seek to create a viable multi-cloud strategy. These core services include analytics, compute, database, identity management, networking, storage, virtual desktops, and web. Azure also offers advanced services such as artificial intelligence, containers, DevOps, Kubernetes, machine learning, and serverless, among others.

As of September 2020, Microsoft Azure has nearly 50 regions throughout the world with seven more in development. 10 of these regions include availability zones. Taken together, these benefits make a compelling argument for enterprises to adopt, embrace, and expand their use of Azure.

**Backup Still a Requirement in the Azure Cloud**

Microsoft Azure offers many features organizations want from a public cloud platform to include high availability, redundancy, security, and many more. Despite the benefits Azure offers, organizations must keep one principle in mind: they retain responsibility for their data.

This puts the onus on organizations to back up and recover their data. Should their data get corrupted, deleted, lost, or compromised, they need a solution in place to protect it.

Microsoft does offer its own Azure backup service. However, it is a separate offering designed to back up virtual machines in the Azure cloud to which organizations must subscribe. Many organizations will have application and data requiring specific backup and recovery features beyond what the Azure backup service offers. This will necessitate they acquire a third-party solution that meets their Azure backup and recovery needs.
Azure Cloud Backup Solutions

In preparing this report, DCIG evaluated twelve cloud backup solutions based on multiple different features and capabilities. The general categories under which these features fell included:

- Backup administration
- Backup capabilities
- Configuration, licensing, and pricing
- Recovery and restores
- Snapshot administration
- Support

Based on these criteria, DCIG awarded the following Azure cloud backup solutions a TOP 5 ranking:

- Cobalt Iron Compass
- Commvault Backup and Recovery
- HYCU for Azure
- Unitrends Backup
- Zerto IT Resilience Platform

Key Similarities

In reviewing these solutions, DCIG noted the TOP 5 solutions shared these characteristics to include:

- **Back up and recover non-Azure databases such as MySQL, Oracle Database, and SAP HANA hosted in Azure.** Each TOP 5 solution can protect MySQL, Oracle Database, and SAP HANA databases hosted in the Azure cloud.
- **Perform instant recoveries.** Each TOP 5 solution comes equipped to perform instant application or data restores to keep downtime to a minimum.
- **Protect on-premises data.** Any of these TOP 5 solutions can protect applications and data residing in the Azure
cloud and on-premises.

- **Protect VMware applications running in Azure.** Each TOP 5 solution gives enterprises the flexibility to protect their VMware applications running in Azure.

**Key Differences**

The TOP 5 solutions also differ in some ways in how they respectively back up and recover applications and data in the Microsoft Azure cloud. These differences include:

- **Deployment options in the Azure cloud.** Each of these TOP 5 offers different options to deploy its solution in the Azure cloud. Two make their solution as an Azure cloud-native SaaS offering. Two deliver their software as a SaaS-based offering outside of the Azure cloud. Four make their software available as an Azure virtual appliance or as software organizations may host on an Azure VM.

- **Backup storage.** Every organization should confirm the Azure storage options each TOP 5 solution offers aligns with their requirements. While the solutions all support Azure Blob, each one manages Azure Managed Disks, Azure File, and Azure Blob storage tiers and regions differently. The use of these tiers potentially impacts backup costs and application and data recovery times.

- **Protection of Azure applications.** The TOP 5 solutions each differ significantly in their protection of general and specialized Azure applications. Organizations might expect them to protect applications such as Azure Active Directory, Exchange, and SQL Server on Virtual Machines. Four TOP 5 solutions protect those three applications. However, only two solutions currently protect SharePoint with three offering protection for Azure Kubernetes Service (AKS). Organizations using other specialized Azure applications such as AutoScale, Container Instances, or Function must choose even more carefully.
Only one solution offers comprehensive support for these specific Azure applications.

- **Protection of Azure databases.** Organizations needing to protect databases such as Azure Database for MariaDB, MySQL, or PostgreSQL, among others, will find limited choices. Only three TOP 5 solutions protect Azure Database for MariaDB or MySQL while two protect Azure Database for PostgreSQL and Azure SQL database.

**Report Availability**

The full TOP 5 report is available for download immediately at either of the two trusted third-party sites listed below. The full report contains additional details such as:

- A list of all twelve solutions evaluated
- Next generation Azure cloud backup features
- Azure cloud backup features that all Azure cloud backup solutions share
- A deeper explanation on the key similarities and differences between the TOP 5 solutions
- A profile of each TOP 5 Azure cloud backup solution that lists the ways it distinguishes itself from the other solutions

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**DCIG 2020-21 TOP 5 Azure Cloud Backup Solutions Report (Cobalt Iron)**
DCIG 2020-21 TOP 5 Azure Cloud Backup Solutions Report (Zerto)

DCIG will release more TOP 5 reports in the weeks and months to come. To be apprised of these announcements, and if you have not already done so, please sign up for the weekly DCIG Newsletter so we may notify you of their availability.