

EVALUATION DATASHEET

Microsoft 365 Backup Vendor Evaluation Criteria

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Microsoft 365 Backup: Critical Capabilities

Criteria that establish the functional baseline for enterprise Microsoft 365 protection: a material deficiency in any one of them cannot be offset by strength elsewhere.



1

Backup Fidelity & M365 Coverage

What is covered, and what survives the restore

Exchange

Primary mailbox and In-Place Archive, Recoverable Items, shared / room / Group mailboxes, public folders

SharePoint

Whole-site restore with custom columns, content types, views, version history and permissions; classic and modern pages

Teams

1:1 and group chats, private and shared channels with their files; posts restored under the original author, date and thread

Entra ID, “lesser” workloads

Users, groups, roles, administrative units, Conditional Access and Intune policies with memberships and assignments. OneNote, Planner, Power Platform

Test it: Managed Metadata columns, .aspx page versions, private-channel files



2

Performance & Scalability

Throughput, API resilience and unattended running

Throughput

>99% backup success rate and >2 MB/sec average speed; first full backup completed inside the agreed window

API resilience

Built-in resilience for API throttling, with intelligent retry and rescheduling of requests to maintain reliable execution without silent or hidden failures

Scale

Tens of thousands of seats, auto-discovery of new accounts, group-based policies, multi-tenant view

Operations

1-30 min onboarding; no proxies, database or storage to size; failures surfaced as actionable messages

Test it: Throttling behaviour, restart after an outage, backup window at full tenant size



3

Product Support Quality

Response speed, resolution and self-service depth

Resolution path

<12h first response and <1h for critical issues, with immediate escalation to engineering when the responder cannot resolve it

Expert support

Replies from staff who know the product and have read your configuration; no canned first-line answers

Documented coverage

Public KB detailing supported data types and their attributes per workload, down to object level

Limitations documented

Unsupported objects, restore caveats and API constraints published and kept current, not discovered in a ticket

Test it: If vendor KB outlines backup & restore capabilities; sales and support reps provide relevant info & quick resolution.

Microsoft 365 Backup: Beyond the Baseline

Criteria that differentiate functionally comparable solutions; their relative importance varies with tenant size, regulatory exposure and internal security posture.



4

Security, Access Control & Audit

Who can reach backup data, and a record of what they did

- Audit log of sign-in, browse, export and restore operations
- Scoped admin roles, configurable restore-only roles
- End-user self-service restore, optionally admin-approved
- Encryption, SSO/MFA, data immutability, geo-residency



5

Licensing & Total Cost

Licensing model and true cost of storage ownership

- Clear model priced with transparent usage limits
- No extra charge for SharePoint, Teams, Groups
- Granular retention settings, storage consumption reporting
- Cancellable contracts with no lock-in/forced renewals



6

Search & Accessibility

Finding and validating data before a restore is committed

- Point-in-time navigation across recovery points
- Live online preview of mail, files and chat threads
- Tenant-wide full-text search of item bodies and attachments
- Search scoped across users, workloads and date ranges



7

Restore & Data Export

Granularity of recovery and accuracy of restored attributes

- Single item through to full account, in place or elsewhere
- Non-destructive restore to the same or another user
- PST, EML and ZIP export for full accounts
- Instant downloads, bulk restores with no queue delays



8

Reporting & API

Visibility of protection status and automation options

- Alerts on failures, quota and coverage gaps
- Domain-wide dashboard with per-user drill-down
- REST API for onboarding, monitoring and restore
- SIEM and log forwarding



9

Ransomware & Malware Detection

Spotting an attack in the backup, and accelerating recovery

- Anomaly alerts on mass deletion or encryption
- Malware and IOC scanning of backup data
- Immutable, air-gapped backup storage attackers can't alter
- Vendor support SLA and 24/7 incident assistance

Microsoft 365 Backup: Afi Capabilities

Afi is engineered for Microsoft 365 fidelity, performance and scalability.

100% focus

On M365/SaaS data sources

2–20 times

Faster than legacy tools

5.3 hours

Median support resolution time

Backup Fidelity & M365 Coverage | 01

Teams. The highest restore fidelity with channels restored with the original authors, sent dates, thread order, formatting, attachments and other metadata.

SharePoint. High-fidelity reconstruction of sites, including original item IDs, schema, content types, views, permissions

Exchange. Complete backup of primary, archive, and Recoverable Items branches; folder identity, parent relationship, hidden state, and folder counters. Messages retain identifiers, classification fields, original MIME content.

Power Platform. Full coverage, including Power BI, Power Apps, Power Automate flows, DLP policies, tenant settings.

Entra ID. Access logs, users, groups, roles, Conditional Access and Intune policies; memberships and assignments intact.

Other workloads. Backup of Copilot conversations, native notebook packages with metadata; plans, buckets, tasks.

Performance & Scalability | 02

Performance. 2-20x faster than legacy backup solutions; initial full backup of 17 GB / 10,000-file SharePoint site takes <18 min; intelligent parallelization and deduplication, minimizing backup windows for subsequent runs.

No technical debt, or legacy constraints. Afi.ai platform is powered by new tech developed in 2020-2026, rather than adapted from legacy software. It is purpose-built for SaaS workloads, with AI capabilities, and cloud-native security.

Proven scalability. Afi supports multiple hyper-scale deployments, protecting petabyte-scale environments with 100s of thousands of users, large Exchange Online mailboxes, 100TB+ SharePoint sites with complex schemas, metadata, and permissions.

Intelligent API resilience. An AI engine handles Microsoft's throttling limits and paces calls beneath them; 4xx/5xx errors are retried and rescheduled, never silently dropped.

Product Support Quality | 03

Escalation path. Afi support team is integrated directly into the engineering organization and works alongside product development, rather than operating as a separate first-tier triage layer -- allowing complex technical issues to be investigated and resolved without being passed through multiple layers of scripted or generic responses.

Fast resolution. 24/7 support availability; ~85% of support requests are *fully resolved* with two or fewer support engineer replies; the median time to full resolution is 5.3 hours.

Track record. 4.6+ stars on Google Workspace, 4.8+ stars on G2 marketplace, across 20,000+ businesses using Afi

Self-service depth. End users can recover their own data, with granular access control and geo-restrictions settings.

Documentation. Detailed product knowledge base states the backed-up fields per workload down to object level, recovery fidelity per scope, and the caveats

04 Security, Access Control & Audit

- Integration with all major BYOK providers; SIEM feeds, IP black-listing, advanced lock mode for highly regulated organizations
- Okta/SAML SSO; delegated access roles w/ granular controls
- SOC 2 audit, pen tests, independent secure code base review

07 Restore & Data Export

- The most extensive range of native export formats (PST, MBOX, EML, VCF, ICS, PBI, JSON and ZIP) and options (granular/bulk)
- Instant access to backups, instant bulk downloads (no need to request exports / wait for download links), live backup data preview

05 Licensing & Total Cost

- No lock-in: no multi-year commitments; all subscriptions are [cancellable at any time](#) with refunds for unused pre-payments
- Predictable licensing: one license per user, explicit storage quotas, as opposed to obscure 'fair use'; Entra ID, archived users, Sites, Teams and shared mailboxes need no additional licenses

08 Reporting & API

- REST API with scoped keys; pre-built integration with major SIEM systems; Instant failure alerts; email, Slack or Teams reports
- Detailed licensing, data retention and storage footprint reporting providing full visibility and control of the cost of backup service

06 Search & Accessibility

- Fast tenant-wide full-text search of files, emails, and other native M365 data; secure search index encrypted with per tenant key
- Instant browse and preview of emails, chats, site items, with granular privacy and preview access control settings

09 Ransomware & Malware Detection

- AI-powered ransomware detection analyzes activity and data-change patterns to identify ransomware, mass encryption, or destructive attacks.
- Immutable air-gapped snapshots; protected recovery points cannot be altered by compromised Microsoft 365 accounts or ransomware.



ABOUT AFI

Enterprise-grade backup for Microsoft 365

Afi is an enterprise-grade, cloud-native data protection platform built for Microsoft 365 and other cloud workloads. Afi protects over 20,000 organizations, supporting millions of protected resources and petabytes of data, and delivering high-performance backup with sophisticated security, governance and enterprise capabilities.

Afi maintains a rigorous security and compliance program. The platform is SOC 2 Type II compliant and independently audited, with additional third-party penetration testing and independent assurance covering Afi's source code and encryption key-management infrastructure. Afi supports GDPR, HIPAA, FERPA, COPPA, PIPEDA and PHIPA requirements; participates in the Cloud Security Alliance STAR program; complies with the EU-U.S. and Swiss-U.S. Data Privacy Frameworks; and holds UK NHS DSPT and Cyber Essentials certifications.

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