In case you didn't know, M365 backup not the best

O n a recent Saturday, I was reading an issue of The Business News and I came across a column on the technology page. I'm a little biased, but that is my favorite feature, and I am reading a well-done piece about Microsoft 365 by Aaron Lahm. He pulled me right into the subject, and I had to know more.

Expanding on the subject matter, I am going to share some additional Microsoft 365 information that I don't think most people are aware of.

Here we go:

Microsoft 365 (M365) is not inherently backed up. What I mean is that there is no automatic service within your M365 service that is creating backups of your email, files or any other data stored in M365.

What that means is if you delete something, it's gone. If you have a disgruntled employee who decides to clear cut all of their emails and work prior to resigning, you just lose that stuff.

Officially, there are a couple of tools built into M365 that could be used in certain circumstances to recover emails and files, but there is often no guarantee, and it can be kind of tricky.

Unofficially, you can call Microsoft with your sob story. They may be semi-receptive to helping you, but again, there is no guarantee. If what you lost happened more than 30 days ago, there really aren't tools or Microsoft people to help you. In that case, it's just gone.

Well… that stinks. How do they get away with that? For starters, they come right out and tell you that they aren't backing up your stuff. You calling and asking for a restore is the same as telling them that you didn't bother to read anything and you're not accountable for your own actions. Wouldn't you be a little grumpy if someone called you at your job and said that?

The good news is there are services for that, and those services aren't that expensive. There's a product called Datto SaaS that costs less than $3 per user account and backs up virtually everything that M365 has to offer including email, SharePoint/Teams and OneDrive. It works slick and it gives you piece of mind.

Here's another thing, and Aaron also referenced this: All of the many wonderful apps. As Jack Nicholson said in Tim's Burton's Batman movie: "Where does he get those wonderful toys?" The answer is: Microsoft apparently, and they're all in Teams.

If you made it all of the way through the pandemic without a Teams meeting, I'm going to assume that you were one of those folks not working. Teams is a one-stop-shop for business. It hooks up to SharePoint so you can share files and workflows and what-not. You have chat, audio calls, video calls and a whole bunch of apps that work within

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Teams. There is a whiteboard, there is a wiki and there is one of my personal favorites, Planner.

Planner, or Tasks By Planner, as I think it is now called, is a tile-based system for keeping track of stuff and assigning tasks. You have checklists, progress updates, due dates, different categories … you know, all of the things that you would expect from a product called Planner. It is a great way to organize tasks and teams and it's all available in Teams on your laptop, mobile phone, tablet or in the Cloud.

For the folks who are using Teams and are super annoyed as I was working with files within Teams, you don't have to. Each Team that you create is also a SharePoint site. Within those SharePoint sites, you can click a button to sync your SharePoint files with OneDrive. Why is that important? Because you can get a classic file structure with OneDrive. No more working to move or manage a bunch of files from within the Teams application. Way better.

Last thing: Email encryption requires a premium license for M365. If you have business basic or business standard and you are a medical business and you send email you care about HIPAA, you'll want to confirm that you have the best licensing for your business and that you have your employees trained to encrypt email that does or may contain HIPAA regulated information.

Actual last thing: Make sure you have Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) configured for all M365 accounts. It doesn't cost anything extra, and it is the best way to protect your data.

There is genuinely no excuse at this point for not using MFA wherever possible. If you aren't using MFA, and you get compromised, you deserve it. Get after it.