Squirrel Archiving

Intelligent SharePoint & Teams Data Management

SmiKar Software

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Executive Summary

Organizations using SharePoint and Microsoft Teams face challenges with increasing storage costs, compliance requirements, and performance bottlenecks caused by excessive data accumulation. **Squirrel Archiving** provides an efficient, cost-effective, and seamless solution for managing inactive data by offloading files from SharePoint to **Azure Blob Storage** while maintaining user accessibility.

With Squirrel Archiving, businesses can significantly reduce SharePoint storage costs by moving older files to Azure Blob Storage. The solution ensures a seamless user experience by replacing archived files with stub links that allow users to restore files with a single click. Compliance with data retention policies and sovereignty requirements is also maintained, helping businesses meet regulatory obligations. Furthermore, by decluttering SharePoint environments, Squirrel improves performance and enhances overall user productivity.

This white paper explores the challenges of SharePoint data management, Squirrel's key features, technical architecture, cost benefits, and implementation process.

Introduction

As organizations increasingly rely on Microsoft SharePoint and Teams for collaboration, they accumulate vast amounts of data. This leads to escalating SharePoint storage costs, performance degradation due to large libraries, compliance challenges related to data sovereignty, and difficulties in managing historical data without disrupting workflows.

Traditional data management solutions often require manual intervention or complex retention policies, making them inefficient for modern organizations. **Squirrel Archiving** automates data archiving, ensuring cost efficiency while maintaining seamless accessibility. By intelligently managing inactive files, it helps organizations optimize SharePoint storage, enhance performance, and streamline compliance efforts.

Squirrel Archiving Overview

Squirrel Archiving is a cloud-based solution designed to reduce SharePoint and Teams storage costs while maintaining user access to archived files. It achieves this by moving inactive files from SharePoint to **Azure Blob Storage** and replacing them with stub links, allowing users to restore files on demand.

The archiving process begins by identifying inactive files based on predefined rules, such as files that have not been accessed for over a year. These files are then securely archived in Azure Blob Storage, significantly reducing SharePoint storage consumption. Despite being archived, users can still access the files as if they were never moved, thanks to the stub links that maintain folder structures and provide seamless restoration.

Key Features

Seamless SharePoint & Teams Integration

Squirrel Archiving seamlessly integrates into the SharePoint UI, providing users with **archive and restore buttons** directly within SharePoint document libraries. This allows users to initiate archiving or restore files effortlessly, without needing to leave their familiar workflow. Additionally, users have the ability to archive files on their own based on their access permissions, giving them more control over their data management while reducing reliance on IT support.

Squirrel Archiving works natively with SharePoint Online and Microsoft Teams, ensuring that archiving and restoration processes are fully integrated with the existing user experience. The solution also supports Microsoft Teams private channels and SharePoint synced folders, making it versatile for various collaboration scenarios.

Cost Savings & Storage Optimization

By offloading files to Azure Blob Storage, Squirrel significantly reduces SharePoint storage consumption. Azure Blob offers a more cost-effective alternative to SharePoint's expensive storage pricing tiers, allowing organizations to save money while maintaining access to critical data.

Intelligent File Restoration

Squirrel ensures that users can restore files on demand by simply clicking a stub link. The restoration process is designed to be seamless, ensuring that users can retrieve archived documents without requiring IT intervention. This self-service approach enhances productivity and minimizes downtime. Additionally, administrators cannot impose restrictions on file restoration, ensuring that end users have full control over accessing their archived data as needed.

Compliance & Data Governance

The solution maintains file metadata and permissions, ensuring that archived data complies with data retention and sovereignty requirements. Squirrel Archiving supports organizational policies by enabling automated archiving processes that align with regulatory standards. It helps businesses enforce data retention rules, reduce the risk of non-compliance penalties,

and ensure that data is stored in accordance with internal governance frameworks. Additionally, archived files remain fully auditable, providing a transparent and trackable history of document management activities.

Security & Scalability

Squirrel Archiving leverages **Azure Blob Storage**, providing enterprise-grade security for archived data. The solution is designed to scale effortlessly, handling millions of files and terabytes of data with ease. To ensure maximum security, Squirrel encrypts all archived files both **at rest and in transit**, using encryption standards that meet **RFC 8032** and **FIPS 186-5** compliance requirements.

Additionally, Squirrel seamlessly integrates with your company's **Azure Active Directory (Entra AD / Azure AD)**, leveraging the robust security features of your existing **Azure Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) solution**. This ensures that only authorized users can access and restore archived data, adding an extra layer of protection to the organization's document management process.

Architecture & Technical Implementation

System Architecture

Squirrel Archiving is built around a **Centralized Management Interface**, providing a single dashboard for monitoring and managing archiving tasks. The **Unified Archiving Engine** processes archiving operations efficiently, ensuring seamless coordination and reliability.

Squirrel integrates directly with **SharePoint Online, Entra ID (Azure AD), and Azure Blob Storage**, enabling seamless communication between Microsoft 365 services and the archiving system. Data remains stored in the organization's own **Azure Blob Storage**, ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements and providing cost-effective, scalable storage solutions.

To enhance security and performance, Squirrel operates within **SmiKar's managed Azure environment** but is deployed within the same Azure region as the customer's Microsoft 365 tenancy. This approach ensures **low latency**, high availability, secure data processing, and compliance with **data sovereignty** requirements, ensuring that archived data remains within the customer's designated geographic region.

Deployment Model

Squirrel follows a **centralized coordination model**, ensuring efficient archiving while maintaining compliance with data sovereignty regulations. This model reduces operational overhead by streamlining archive and restoration processes while allowing organizations to maintain full control over their archived data.

Since each client operates in a **dedicated infrastructure environment**, data security and isolation are prioritized, preventing shared resources between customers.

Cost Benefits & ROI

Cost Comparison: SharePoint vs Azure Blob Storage

SharePoint storage costs approximately **$0.20** per GB per month, whereas Azure Blob Storage costs as low as **$0.018** per GB per month. This translates to potential savings of up **to 90**% on storage costs alone.

However, when factoring in both Squirrel Archiving and Azure Blob Storage, organizations can achieve up to **70% total savings** compared to storing data solely within SharePoint Online.

Squirrel Pricing

Squirrel Archiving follows a flexible pricing model based on two main factors:

- **Platform License**: This cost depends on the number of **Microsoft 365 (O365) licensed users** in the organization.

- **Per TB Storage Charge**: A charge applies for the amount of data archived by Squirrel beyond the allocated SharePoint storage limit.

With the combination of **Squirrel Archiving costs and Azure storage costs**, organizations can achieve **up to 70% savings** compared to storing data solely within SharePoint Online.

For a customized pricing quote based on your organization's specific needs, contact **SmiKar Software**.

- **Platform License**: This cost is dependent on the number of **Microsoft 365 (O365) licensed users** in the organization.

- **Per TB Storage Charge**: A charge applies for the volume of data archived by Squirrel beyond the allocated SharePoint storage limit.

With the combination of **Squirrel Archiving costs and Azure storage costs**, organizations can achieve **up to 70% savings** compared to storing data solely within SharePoint Online.

For example, an organization archiving 50TB per year could **save** over **$100,000** annually by leveraging Squirrel Archiving and Azure Blob Storage instead of SharePoint.

Implementation & Integration

Implementation Process

SmiKar Software works closely with organizations to integrate Squirrel Archiving into their SharePoint environment. The deployment process ensures that the solution is tailored to each customer's needs while maintaining optimal performance and security. Unlike other providers, SmiKar does not share infrastructure between clients, ensuring dedicated resources and enhanced security for each organization.

SmiKar Software works closely with organizations to integrate Squirrel Archiving into their SharePoint environment. The deployment process ensures that the solution is tailored to each customer's needs while maintaining optimal performance and security.

- **Deployment Location**: Squirrel Archiving is deployed in the same Azure region as the organization's Microsoft 365 tenancy, ensuring low latency and compliance with data sovereignty requirements.

- **Integration with Microsoft Services**: Squirrel seamlessly connects with **SharePoint Online, Entra ID (Azure AD), and Azure Blob Storage**, ensuring smooth operation within the existing IT infrastructure.

- **Managed Tenant**: Squirrel remains within SmiKar's Azure tenant, simplifying deployment and maintenance while ensuring high availability and security.

- **Ongoing Support & Monitoring**: SmiKar provides ongoing assistance to ensure successful integration and continued optimization of the archiving process.

Microsoft 365 Integration

Squirrel works seamlessly with **Microsoft Purview, retention policies, and eDiscovery**, ensuring that archived data remains searchable and compliant. The solution enables organizations to apply **automated retention rules, legal holds, and audit trails** to archived data, helping maintain regulatory compliance.

Security & Compliance Considerations

Data Encryption

All files archived by Squirrel are encrypted **at rest and in transit**, ensuring data security. Squirrel's encryption meets the standards defined in **RFC 8032** and **FIPS 186-5**, providing robust cryptographic protection for sensitive data. By leveraging advanced encryption techniques, Squirrel ensures that archived files remain secure against unauthorized access. Additionally, all encryption keys are managed within **Azure Key Vault**, adding another layer of security and compliance with enterprise security policies.

Access Control

Role-based permissions ensure that only authorized users can restore archived files, enhancing security and governance. Squirrel Archiving provides two administrative roles within the Squirrel portal:

- **Full Admin**: Grants complete control over all system settings, configurations, and archiving operations.

- **Archive Admin**: Designed for service desk personnel, allowing them to manage archiving tasks without full administrative privileges.

Additionally, end users can only restore or archive files based on their access permissions within the associated SharePoint site, ensuring that security and governance policies are enforced at all levels.

Audit Logging

Squirrel maintains a comprehensive audit log of all archiving and restoration activities, providing full visibility into data management operations. Administrators can search and review this log directly from the Squirrel portal, enabling them to monitor actions, track compliance, and investigate any anomalies efficiently.

Conclusion & Next Steps

Summary of Benefits

Squirrel Archiving provides a **cost-effective, seamless, and secure** solution for managing SharePoint and Teams data. By reducing storage costs, ensuring compliance, and improving SharePoint performance, it empowers organizations to manage their data efficiently.

With Squirrel, organizations can significantly lower their SharePoint storage expenses while maintaining user accessibility through stub links. The platform ensures compliance with regulatory and data sovereignty requirements by retaining metadata and security settings. Additionally, Squirrel enhances operational efficiency by reducing SharePoint clutter, which in turn improves system performance and search functionality.

Security is a priority, with industry-standard encryption and role-based access controls ensuring that only authorized users can restore archived files. Squirrel's dedicated infrastructure model also guarantees that each client has isolated resources, improving data security and system reliability.

By integrating seamlessly with Microsoft Purview, Azure Blob Storage, and Entra ID (Azure AD), Squirrel Archiving provides a future-proofed approach to SharePoint storage management while delivering up to 70% in cost savings.

Call to Action

Contact **SmiKar Software** today for a **demo or proof of concept**, and take the first step toward optimizing your SharePoint storage strategy.