



# Structured Data Archiving for Application Retirement

A Guide to Structured Data Archiving and Decommissioning  
your Legacy Applications

## Introduction

IT departments routinely look to retire little-used, obsolete, or outdated applications. According to a 2020 survey conducted by Gartner Group, managing the technical debt associated with legacy applications is one of the top three priorities for IT leaders worldwide. The key drivers for this are:

- Reduce on-premises application infrastructure costs
- Reduce IT operational costs
- Cloud adoption
- Mergers and acquisitions
- Increased focus on data governance and regulatory obligations

The issue most organizations face when contemplating application retirement is what to do with the structured data within these applications: delete it along with the retiring application or archive it for business continuity, regulatory compliance and eDiscovery requirements. Deleting the data without understanding how it's being used in the organization, knowing if it's subject to regulatory requirements or potentially involved in litigation (eDiscovery/spoliation) is a considerable risk. The challenge with archiving structured data is ensuring that potentially sensitive data is securely managed, and that content can be accurately searched and presented in a viewable and usable format.

The majority of legacy application retirement candidates are on-premises third party or in-house developed back-office applications (such as CRM, ERP, financial and HR applications) that generate structured data sets. In most cases, the data is stored in a non-standard file format in a custom storage repository. Data search and retrieval is dependent on the application. Reliance on the individual application makes it much more difficult to simply copy the structured data to a common/centralized data repository for later search and reference.

Organizations considering moving data to an archive need to consider how the product will handle data migration and ensure it is optimized for structured data - structured data archiving (SDA). Specifically, the SDA solution must maintain data relationships and access controls while offering multiple options for searching, viewing, and reporting on the data. Current SDA solutions include platforms deployed on-premises, as software as a service (SaaS) or, as a platform as a service (PaaS). Archive360 is currently the only SDA solution that can be deployed as a PaaS.

## Why keep structured data

Structured Data Archiving (SDA) solutions provide a way to store and manage structured data sets for later reference, regulatory compliance, litigation response, and data consolidation due to mergers & acquisitions.

**Regulatory Compliance:** Many organizations now recognize that structured data applications can also contain data subject to regulatory retention requirements that can include longer time periods. For example, the SEC has begun asking for Salesforce data (a SaaS CRM platform) from brokers/traders in information requests based on SEC Rule 17a-4.

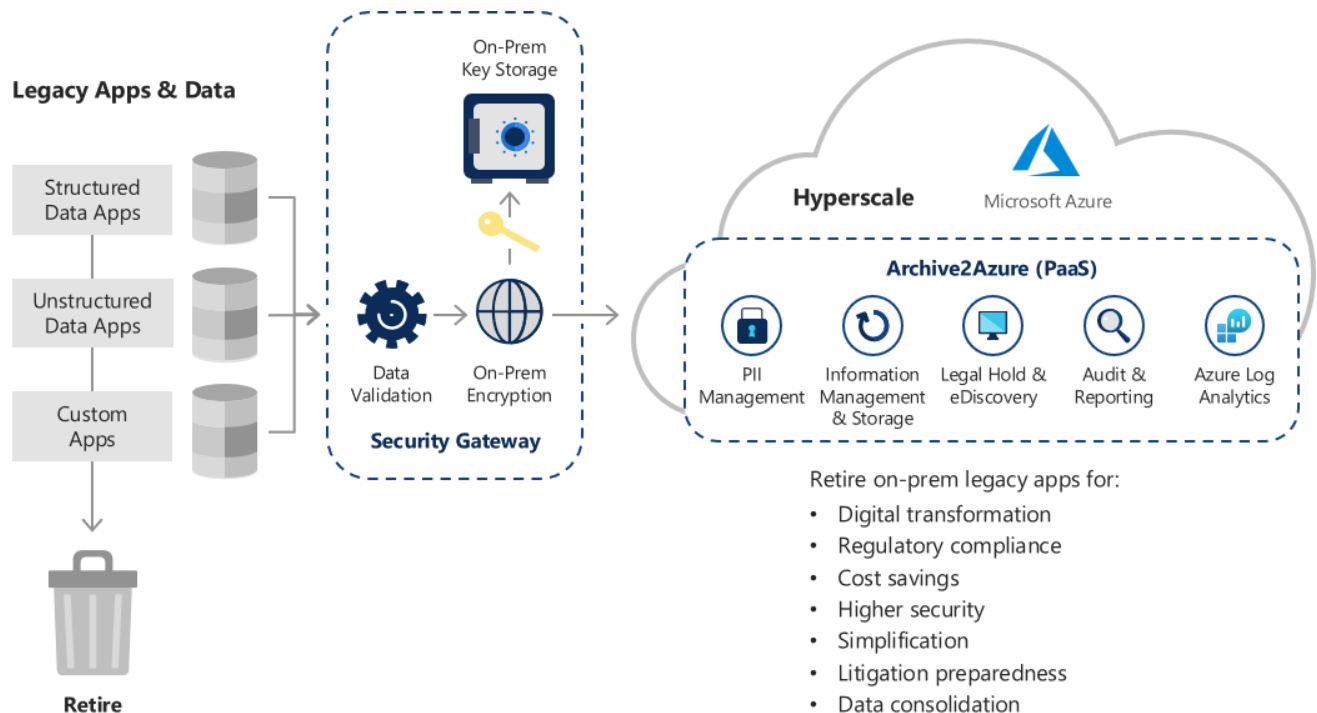
**Litigation Preparedness/eDiscovery:** Another important reason to archive data from retired applications is for eDiscovery purposes. Relevant data need only be kept and secured with a litigation hold if the company anticipates future litigation or is involved in a lawsuit that could include data from the retiring application. Many General Counsels recognize that this legacy data could also bolster a future case, so keeping it available is a good strategy.

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**Mergers and acquisitions:** As organizations merge, data consolidation from competing/duplicate-use applications is often a corporate strategy to reduce cost and increase productivity. By consolidating this data to a centralized archive (with both structured and unstructured data), the company can eliminate duplicate infrastructure and improve the efficiency/productivity of business user access and ongoing retention policy management. Additionally, for inactive structured data still required for regulatory compliance or eDiscovery, archiving it is the only solution.

## Archive360 and Structured Data Archiving

Archive2Azure is a native Azure PaaS platform (no VMs required) that provides organizations the ability to securely and intelligently categorize, onboard, store (in native format), secure, and manage both structured and unstructured data in their own Azure tenancy. Archive2Azure utilizes the Azure PaaS cloud model to provide users more direct control and customization over their retired data while applying retention/disposition policies, full legal case management, and the highest levels of data security in the industry. Additionally, Archive2Azure allows clients to closely control costs by changing storage tiers and adjusting their application performance based on changing needs.



Archive360 is listed as a "Visionary" in the Gartner 2020 EIA MQ, and is the only EIA MQ vendor that Gartner has recognized as providing a full archiving/information management solution for both structured and unstructured data in a single consolidated archive.

## SaaS versus PaaS

Software as a Service (SaaS) is the most well-known cloud computing service—but that doesn't mean it's the best application retirement model.

**SaaS** archiving, in general, is positioned as a "one size fits all" solution where the client is granted access to a specific archiving application that many clients utilize for a particular capability, i.e., archiving. This means that feature/functionality customization is not possible, and more importantly, security capability is controlled and managed by the SaaS vendor, including data encryption, encryption key storage, and data access.

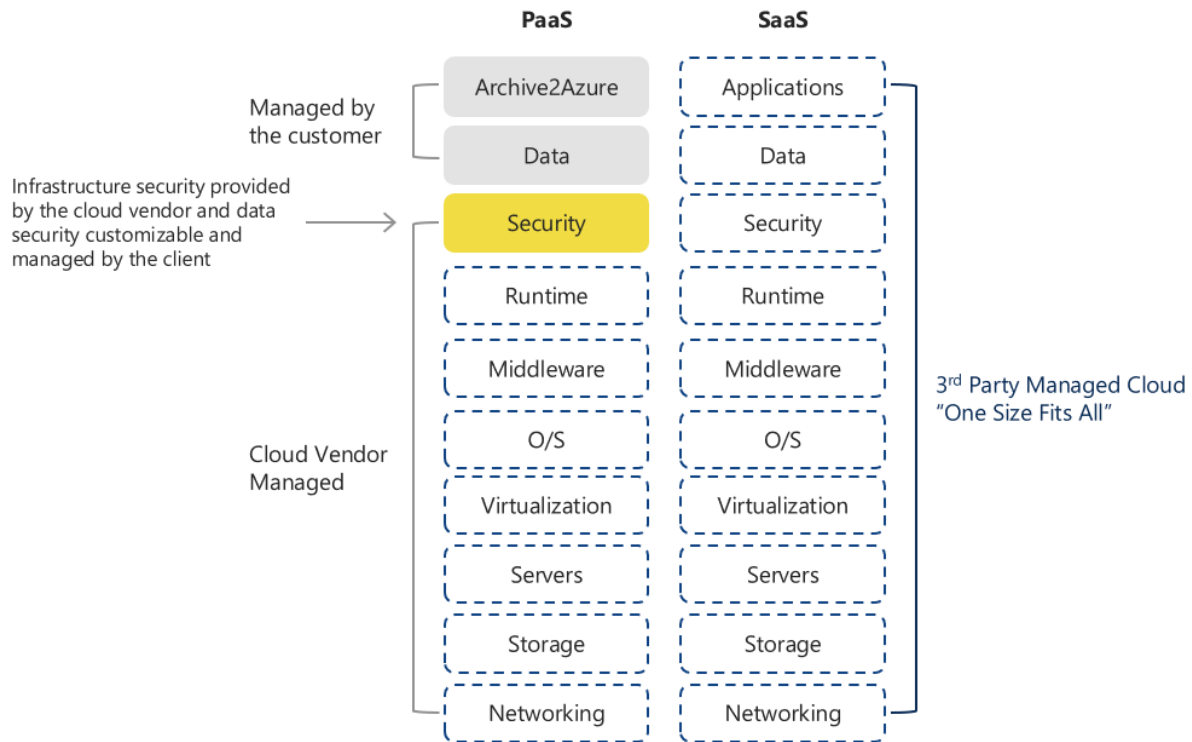
### The Pros & Cons of SaaS

#### Pros:

- SaaS vendors provide users with an application via predictable licensing and operating costs via a subscription model
- All features and functionality are *usually* included in the subscription
- Software is managed and upgraded by the vendor
- Service failure does not *usually* result in loss of data

#### Cons:

- Overall costs usually higher than PaaS solutions
- No flexibility in functionality or scalability – one size fits all for all customers, regardless of requirements
- Data exports can be complicated and frustrating due to possible data conversions and the ability of the SaaS vendor to scale and throttle export speeds
- Depending on the static application, you may lack additional functionality needed as your business requirements change
- Data portability issues if/when you cancel your subscription: SaaS vendors may charge for data to be pulled out of their proprietary cloud (i.e., data ransoming)
- Data Security - SaaS-based archives use a shared (multi-tenant) architecture, introducing significant data security concerns
  - Inability to customize security protocols or performance levels
  - Data sovereignty (geo) choice may not be available
- Data chain of custody can be an issue during legacy migrations



## PaaS versus SaaS

**PaaS** is a cloud computing model that provides companies with a more customizable cloud environment to develop, manage, and deliver focused solutions. In addition to storage and other computing resources, companies can utilize a suite of pre-built, native tools to develop, customize, and use various cloud applications and functionality, such as information management and archiving.

Additionally, a PaaS environment allows for the quick incorporation of new cloud platform capabilities such as machine-learning-based data auto-classification and predictive supervision. Companies that want to implement agile use-case methodologies and want more control of their cloud-based archiving platform, including controlling their own security and encryption keys, are the best suited for PaaS-cloud archiving. PaaS provides a simple but elegant way to customize and utilize custom applications in a secure cloud environment.

PaaS began to grow in popularity in 2018 due to gaining platform maturity, on-demand scalability, customization, cost, increased security profiles, and the ability to take advantage of emerging public cloud ML/AI technology stack offerings.

## The Pros & Cons of PaaS

### Pros:

- Usually, PaaS offerings are provided as a subscription model
- Scalability can be automatic
- PaaS providers can directly manage security, operating systems, server software, and backups but with the ability, for the customer to add/customize additional capabilities
- The customer controls infrastructure costs
- The customer has a direct agreement with the cloud platform provider instead of a third-party multi-tenant SaaS cloud provider
- PaaS offers fully elastic scalability for rapid expansion as needed
- Data resiliency
- Guaranteed data sovereignty

### Cons:

- Slightly more responsibility/oversight for the client
- Minimum entry requirements could add additional short-term costs for smaller organizations
- Application maintenance is your or the application provider's responsibility
- Security must be integrated into and maintained with your corporate methodology

## About Archive360

Archive360 is the enterprise information archiving company that businesses and government agencies worldwide trust to securely migrate their digital data to the cloud, and responsibly manage it for today's regulatory, legal and business intelligence obligations. This is accomplished by applying context around the search, classification, and indexing of data including files, videos, and emails—all while allowing organizations to maintain full control over privacy, access, and compliance. Archive360 is a global organization that delivers its solutions both directly and through a worldwide network of partners.

Archive360 is a Microsoft Cloud Solution Provider, and the Archive2Azure™ solution is Microsoft Azure Certified. To learn more, please visit [www.archive360.com](http://www.archive360.com).

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