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PROOF OF CONCEPT AND CASE STUDY

# IBM Spectrum Protect and Backing up to Object Storage in the Cloud

Andrew Wojnarek | Sr. Systems Engineer  
ATS Innovation Center, Malvern PA

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## Introduction

The ATS Group is a business partner specializing in the full IBM enterprise stack, and Spectrum Protect in particular.

We've helped customers set up Spectrum Protect environments that backup petabytes of data in a way that's robust and actually works at scale. There has been an explosion of the cloud as well as a downpour of people talking cloud migration – and there's nothing easier than moving your backups to the cloud.

In this PoC we set up the following:

- AIX 7.2
- Power 8 S822
- IBM Spectrum Protect 8.1
- 3 clients: AIX, Linux and Windows

The goal of this PoC was the following:

- Install Spectrum Protect.
- Figure out how Spectrum Protect tiers backups to a cloud.
- Simulate a customer's environment.



## Description

We successfully got the standard stack up and running quickly, running Spectrum Protect on AIX 7.x. We established some dummy hosts and backed up some data we created. We also built a filesystem called /cloudcache:

```
/dev/cloudcachelv 254720.00 20305.72 93% 2356 1% /cloudcache
```

We then created a Storage Pool that is connected to **Object Storage** out in the cloud:

SP81\_POC STG.S3

Choose the type of pool that best supports your business goals. [Learn more](#)

**i** To copy data from an existing directory-container pool, cancel the wizard, select the pool, and click **More > Add Container-copy Pool**.

**Container-based storage**

- Directory  
File-based storage on disk with optional copy pools
- On-premises cloud  
Object-based storage that is managed by internal IT staff in your data center
- Off-premises cloud**  
Storage in vendor-managed repositories, using IBM SoftLayer, OpenStack Swift or Amazon S3

**Traditional volume-based storage**

- Disk (primary)  
Storage on disk or in a mountable deduplicating appliance
- Tape (primary)  
Storage on tape or in a deduplicating VTL
- Tape (copy)  
Copies of primary storage on tape or in a VTL

After entering a username, APIkey and the URL, it **connected** immediately:

Container STGAWS.02 SP81\_POC  Normal 0 GB





What we learned is that the general process for backing up to the cloud **follows these steps:**

- 1 A client backs up directly to Spectrum Protect via the filesystem /cloudcache.
- 2 This cache fills up and empties at scheduled times during the day.
- 3 The system copies the data up to Object Storage.
- 4 Data is drained from the filesystem.

This process is roughly what happens daily as you utilize Spectrum Protect and Object Storage. When you create the Storage Pool, the option to encrypt the data at rest is already set.

This is the way the data looks like as it sits **on Object Storage:**

Name	Last modified	Size	Storage class
000000000000014a.dcf	Jan 18, 2017 8:03:54 AM	15.6 MB	Standard

Since the S3 endpoint is over HTTPS, the data leaves Spectrum Protect encrypted, and sits on disk inside the Object Storage bucket encrypted. In this way, data is continually encrypted and protected throughout the process.



With Object Storage, one of the neat things is the control you have over pricing. It's so easy to compare between vendors – as you can see below, we easily compared IBM Cloud Object Storage with Amazon S3:

	Standard Storage	Standard - Infrequent Access Storage †	Glacier Storage
First 50 TB / month	\$0.023 per GB	\$0.0125 per GB	\$0.004 per GB
Next 450 TB / month	\$0.022 per GB	\$0.0125 per GB	\$0.004 per GB
Over 500 TB / month	\$0.021 per GB	\$0.0125 per GB	\$0.004 per GB

  

Monthly storage volume (TB)	Standard	Vault	Cold Vault
0-499.99	\$0.0300 GB/Month	\$0.0200 GB/Month	\$0.0110 GB/Month
500+	\$0.0260 GB/Month	\$0.0180 GB/Month	\$0.0110 GB/Month

It's very simple to put in all of the characteristics of your backup strategy and get a clear picture on cost per month.

## Here is what to expect from the ACTLOG showing the 'Cloud Sweeping':

Roll off to cloud bucket gvicaix61 a.sp81 poc.stgaws.01:

Once roll off completes local cache is emptied.

- ANR0984I Process 25 for Local to Cloud Transfer started in the BACKGROUND at 08:02:23.
- ANR3832I Local to Cloud Transfer process 25 for Storage Pool STGAWS.01 started.
- ANR3833I Local to Cloud Transfer process 25 for Storage Pool STGAWS.01 has completed.
- ANR0986I Process 25 for Local to Cloud Transfer running in the BACKGROUND processed 487 items for a total of 99,252,589 bytes with a completion state of SUCCESS at 08:04:33.



### **We found several advantages of this type of setup:**

- Customers who currently back up directly to tape will find this process very desirable.
- Customers who are considering moving a function of a legacy environment to the cloud can benefit from this style of backup.
- Customers who may not want to invest the capital expenses in a tape library + tapes + offsite storage can save costs through this kind of cloud backup.

At the same time, it's important to understand that there is no 'tier' to the cloud. Currently, customers back up to a cache, and it drains. Tiering would consist of backing up to Spectrum Protect, and putting a policy in place that directs data to be moved from primary storage to the cloud after a 30-day period.

### **It's also helpful to keep in mind:**

- You need to be especially conscious of your organization's bandwidth. In our office test lab, we quickly saturated the network, causing some congestion for our VoIP system.
- We investigated the tiering of data, but found it to be a negative for this PoC. However, this is a capability that is coming soon, which will completely round out this exciting feature.



## Result

In conclusion, we were able to successfully build a Spectrum Protect server and backup a handful of different operating systems to the cloud. We discovered several benefits, including how much control you have over the entire process, especially as each individual server is not connecting directly to the cloud provider. This allows you to commit your backups to a cache, and have it slowly trickle up to the cloud. With the incoming feature of tiering in Spectrum Protect, and with the existing functionality to back directly up to the cloud, this is a rockstar of an edition to one of our favorite products.



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