Five Reasons the new IBM Cloud Object Storage May Solve Your Enterprise Data Storage Challenges

A Stratecast Analysis Sponsored by Cleversafe, an IBM Company[1]

Using most cloud object storage services is like parking in a New York City public garage. You choose a service based on the posted rates, hand over your valuable assets—and watch them disappear. You have no visibility into where they end up or what neighbors are sharing the space; you just know that the provider's primary goal is to cram as much as possible into every cubic inch of space. You have to decide upfront how quickly you want to access the data, but have no control over relevant performance parameters.

Is a public garage really good enough for your enterprise storage?

For businesses that recognize storage as a strategic investment, the answer is increasingly "no." Businesses need the control, performance, and security of a sophisticated storage system, combined with the cost-effectiveness and scalability of the cloud.

This is where IBM's new Cloud Object Storage service may fill an important gap. The newly introduced service is based on technology from IBM's acquisition of Cleversafe. Cleversafe's sophisticated object storage software is now available on the IBM Cloud (SoftLayer) infrastructure, to deliver high-performance, highly controllable cloud storage.

IBM Cloud Object Storage combines Cleversafe's patented technology with a high degree of user flexibility, potentially allowing enterprises to achieve storage performance levels that are rare in the cloud. Consider, for example, latency—an important performance metric for workloads that send frequent requests to the storage data. Such workloads require speed (short time to complete the transaction) and consistency (little variation in latency per request). In IBM's own head-to-head comparison of like-configured constant-request workloads, IBM Cloud Object Storage achieved up to 6.6x lower latency for "read" transactions and up to 11.5x lower latency for "write" transactions than Amazon Web Services S3.[2]

> *In IBM internal tests, IBM Cloud Object Storage achieved latency levels up to 6.6 times lower than AWS S3 for "read" transactions, and up to 11.5 times lower latency for "write" transactions.*

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[1] Please note that the insights and opinions expressed in this assessment are those of Stratecast, and have been developed through the Stratecast research and analysis process. These expressed insights and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views of the company executives interviewed.

[2] IBM internal study comparing total transaction latency for a constant request rate workload, for 95% of operations.

Can your enterprise benefit from IBM Cloud Object Storage? Here are five reasons why the service may be what you need for your enterprise data storage:

1. **Single-tenant option**: Over half of enterprises use a hosted private cloud environment for their mission-critical or sensitive workloads.[3] However, most cloud service providers offer only a partial solution: a dedicated network connection and perhaps an option for single-tenant compute resources, but only multi-tenant object storage. Not so with IBM Cloud Object storage, which offers both multi-tenant and single-tenant options, enabling you to implement an end-to-end private cloud.

2. **True hybrid environment**: It's a hybrid world, with more than 70% of businesses surveyed by Stratecast currently using or planning to implement a hybrid environment that encompasses both the premises data center and hosted cloud services.[4] For a true hybrid storage solution, enterprises can deploy the IBM Cloud Object Storage (Cleversafe) software in their data center with full integration to the IBM Cloud-based service.

3. **Information dispersal technology**: Based on patented Cleversafe technology, IBM Cloud Object Storage utilizes distributed architecture and enhanced capabilities, such as distributed erasure coding. Such advanced technology is designed to provide greater security, availability, and scalability than the traditional array-based architectures used in most cloud object storage services. In addition, the technology can provide bottom-line cost advantages over other services, since less capacity is required to support equivalent availability levels.

4. **Visibility and control**: Most cloud storage services require a leap of faith, since enterprises have no visibility into the storage environment and no ability to make tweaks to optimize performance as needed. In contrast, IBM Cloud Object Storage allows enterprises to tweak their cloud storage configurations—for example, by adjusting object indexing—to meet their requirements for latency, availability, and performance.

5. **Support for multiple Application Programming Interfaces (APIs)**: In a heterogeneous environment, enterprises want the flexibility to select—and reselect—from a choice of storage providers. In fact, 65% of IT decision-makers cite support for open source standards as an important criterion in selecting a cloud service provider.[5] Yet, most cloud storage services discourage choice with proprietary-only platforms. In contrast, IBM Cloud Object Storage provides maximum flexibility by supporting three REST-based APIs. In addition to a proprietary content repository, Cleversafe provides APIs for Amazon Web Services' S3 and OpenStack Swift.

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[3] 2015 Stratecast Cloud User Survey

[4] 2015 Stratecast Cloud User Survey

[5] Ibid.

With these differentiators, IBM Cloud Object Storage is positioned to deliver the scalable, high-performance cloud-based object storage that enterprises need, without compromising on the budget. Stratecast will continue to work with IBM and other cloud service providers to provide further insight on price-performance assessments.[6]

Cloud-based object storage should not be merely a place to park your precious corporate content. Stratecast believes IBM Cloud Object Storage may lead the way for a new and much-needed generation of cloud object storage services that truly meet enterprise needs.

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[6] Stratecast is conducting an extensive review of price and performance claims regarding IBM Cloud Object Storage and its competitors, and will publish results in upcoming months.

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