

SPANNING BACKUP VS.  
GOOGLE VAULT

Understanding the  
difference between

# GOOGLE VAULT AND SPANNING BACKUP

—  
SPANNING

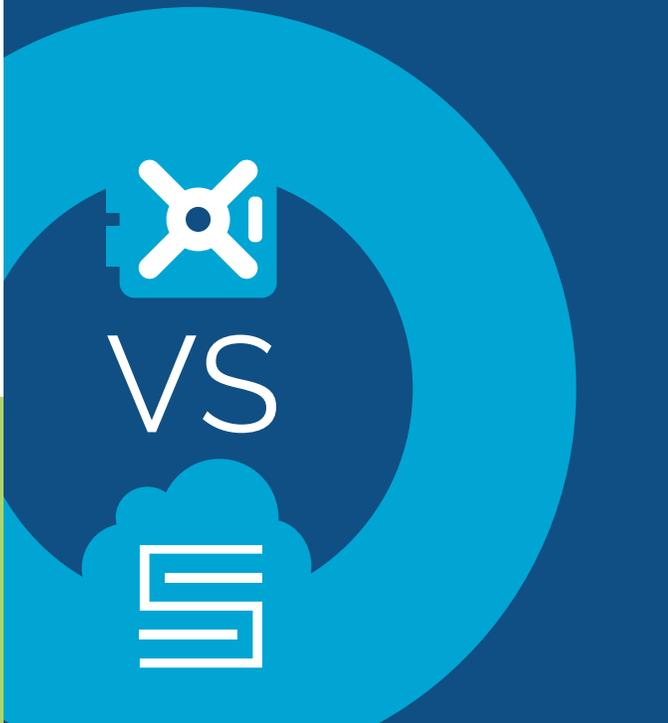


Many people concerned about data loss in G Suite wonder if Google Vault is the solution to their problems. It's not. Vault is designed to meet eDiscovery and compliance needs, but not backup and recovery needs.

For backup and recovery, you need a solution designed specifically for that purpose, like Spanning Backup for G Suite. In this paper, we'll look at the differences between Vault and Spanning Backup, so you can make an informed decision about what to do to make sure all your needs are met.

## CONTENTS

THE BASICS	03
BACKING UP G SUITE DATA	04
RESTORING LOST G SUITE DATA	05
DATA RETENTION AND ARCHIVING	07
eDISCOVERY	09
MAKING THE BEST CHOICE TO MEET ALL YOUR NEEDS	10



## THE BASICS

As you can see in the table below, the purposes, capabilities, and even prices for both Google Vault and Spanning Backup are very different, which is why it's so important to consider them in terms of what issue you're trying to address – eDiscovery and archival storage, or backup and recovery.

In this report, we will explore the use cases for each, and those use cases that best fit Vault or a backup and restore solution like Spanning Backup for G Suite. To get started, here are a few basic things to know about both of these products:

KEY CONSIDERATIONS	GOOGLE VAULT	SPANNING BACKUP
<b>Business Function</b>	eDiscovery and archival services to enable legal investigations and litigation holds	Backup and recovery to meet overall data protection requirements
<b>Supported G Suite Apps</b>	Gmail, Hangouts Chat, Google Talk chats, Drive (including Team Drives) and Groups	Gmail, Drive (including Team Drives), Calendars, Contacts and Sites
<b>Account Requirements</b>	Requires a paid G Suite account for each user in order to retain data in Vault	Does not require a paid G Suite account to retain data; all data is stored permanently in Spanning Backup independent of Google
<b>Primary Users</b>	Allows G Suite administrators and legal personnel to search for and export mail, Hangout Chats, Google Talk chats, Groups, and files in Google Drive (including Team Drives)	Allows G Suite and Spanning administrators, and end users, to search for, restore, and export data in Gmail, Drive (including Team Drives), Calendars, Contacts and Sites
<b>Compliance</b>	Required by the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure (FRCP) to ensure legal access to electronic data	Required by numerous compliance mandates and frameworks (COBIT, Sarbanes-Oxley, HIPAA, and others) to ensure business continuity
<b>List Price</b>	\$120/user/year	\$48/user/year

## BACKING UP G SUITE DATA

Some Google administrators may think that Vault is a “good enough” tool to use for backup and restore, as well as eDiscovery and archiving.

While Vault is a good solution for data retention for legal needs, it doesn’t meet the primary use case for backup and restore - business continuity. In fact, Google notes that [“If you delete a user, all the data associated with the user’s account will be removed from Google.”](#)

Most importantly, Vault isn’t purpose-built to enable rapid, granular restores from any point in time. The table below outlines the backup and restore functionality of Vault vs Spanning Backup for G Suite.

GOOGLE VAULT	SPANNING BACKUP
Retain, hold, search, or export Gmail, Hangouts Chat, Google Talk Chat, Groups and Drive (including Team Drives)	Automatically backs up Gmail, Drive (including Team Drives), Calendars, Contacts and Sites, daily or on demand
Does not restore data back into Google, only allows you to export data	Makes it easy to restore point-in-time data back into G Suite with one click; also allows you to export data
Stores all archived data only in Google	Stores all backed up data in a private, secure section of the Amazon S3 cloud so that you have copies of your data in two separate clouds
Permits access only by administrators and named legal personnel	Permits access by end users to find and restore their lost data, and by administrators to monitor backups and restore lost data

## RESTORING LOST G SUITE DATA

We say it often: backup is nothing without fast, accurate, automatic restores. Backing up data – making a copy and archiving it somewhere – is one thing, but what matters even more is how quickly and easily lost data can be restored, how accurate and complete the restoration is, and how fast the organization can get back to business.

To clearly illustrate the differences between Vault and Spanning Backup, let's consider two use cases: recovering lost emails, and recovering lost Drive files.

### RECOVERING EMAILS

Let's say a malicious insider deleted emails and then emptied the Trash in an attempt to harm the organization.

What happens when the deleted emails are needed?

#### With Vault

The end user must contact an admin to find the emails. Once the emails are located, the admin can export them to an mbox or pst file format and then manually upload them back into the user's Google account using a tool like Thunderbird. Any labels that were previously attached will be lost.

#### With Spanning Backup

The end user uses the search function to find the emails, then simply clicks to restore it directly to Gmail, with all labels intact.

Backup is nothing without fast,  
accurate restoration.

## RECOVERING DRIVE CONTENTS

Drive contents (including Team Drives) can easily be deleted, corrupted, accidentally overwritten, or encrypted by ransomware. What happens when the organization needs those lost Drive files?

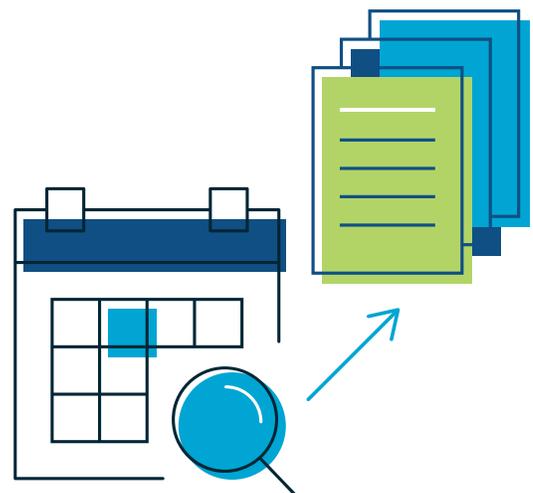
### With Vault

In the event of a ransomware attack, Vault isn't useful, since it doesn't include previous versions of non-native Google files like Microsoft Word, Powerpoint and Excel - the last-known-good version before the attack. In the case of simple loss or data corruption, a user must contact an admin, who would then search for the specific Drive contents in order to find the file. Note that Vault only searches the latest version of the Drive files, and does not include deleted files. An admin would then download the files, and manually import them back into Drive. These files do not retain any sharing settings.

### With Spanning Backup

An end user or admin can search for the files, or view their Drive exactly how it looked from any point-in-time. An end user can then restore their files directly back into their Google account, and an admin can restore drive files into whichever account they prefer.

"If you delete a user, all the data associated with the user's account will be removed from Google."



# DATA RETENTION AND ARCHIVING

Vault is designed for archiving and data retention, but not for data backup and restore. On the other hand, Spanning Backup was designed to backup and restore data, but it can also handle archiving and data retention – although in different ways than Vault does.

Depending on your archiving and retention requirements, you may want to have both products, or you may find that Spanning Backup is sufficient to meet your needs. Here’s how each one addresses various aspects of archiving and data retention.

GOOGLE VAULT	SPANNING BACKUP
Offers granular Gmail and Drive retention policies with exceptions for litigation holds	Offers domain-wide email retention policies
Vault archives Gmail, Hangouts chat, Google Talk chat, Groups, and Drive (including Team Drives); other G Suite data may be subject to data loss	Spanning retains all G Suite data - Gmail, Drive (including Team Drives), Calendars, Contacts and Sites.
Archiving accounts for former employees with Vault requires a G Suite account (\$120/user/year)	Archiving accounts for former employees with Spanning Backup requires a Spanning license (\$48/user/year)

As your team evaluates solutions for data retention and archiving, or for data restoration, the following questions may help your evaluation process.

- How much control do we need over setting our mail retention policy? How often will it change? Will we only have to set it once?
- What Google Drive data do we need retained or archived? Will we need to retain and restore previous and deleted versions of non-native Drive contents, as well as native? Do we need to be able to backup and restore Team Drives?
- How long do we need to keep the data? If we could keep it forever, would we?

By including business continuity use cases as well as legal retention use cases in your evaluation process, your team will better be able to determine which solutions to adopt, and why.

What are you trying to solve for – eDiscovery or backup and recovery?

---

## eDISCOVERY

Vault is a great tool for eDiscovery. However, Spanning Backup may be able to help with your eDiscovery needs as well. For example, if an employee is suspected of leaking sensitive customer information such that legal action might be taken, here are the different ways you could address that with Vault or with Spanning.

### With Vault

You put a Hold on the user's account in Vault, create a Matter in Vault, and then create and save a search query for the user's name.

### With Spanning Backup

You search for the content in the backups of the end user's account, view versions of the files in Drive and export the data as needed.

Vault has a more defined, formal structure for dealing with eDiscovery, but Spanning Backup may be enough, depending on your needs. When it comes to eDiscovery, you may want to ask yourself:

- How often does this organization deal with legal matters?
- What kind of data do I need to be able to search?
- Will my local search be sufficient, or do I need something with more robust controls?

One set of circumstances where Spanning Backup will be useful is when a user has left the organization, and you need access to their G Suite data. You'll find the data archived in Spanning Backup. And if you use both Spanning and Vault, you can restore the data back into any account and use both Spanning and Vault services with it.



# MAKING THE BEST CHOICE TO MEET ALL YOUR NEEDS

Vault and Spanning Backup are both valuable resources for organizations that are concerned about protecting their G Suite data. Spanning Backup complements Vault by enabling regular backup of all G Suite Apps and by providing fast, easy restoration of the data back into G Suite for the same user's account or to a different user's account. These capabilities are essential for meeting compliance requirements for backup and restore to ensure business continuity, as well as for restoring data efficiently for everyday business purposes.

If having two solutions seems impractical for your organization, consider the rapid increase in ransomware attacks. While many organizations use both Vault and Spanning Backup for G Suite, if you only have budget for one solution, rapid recovery from ransomware attacks might be the most important use case, since a ransomware attack can put your organization out of operation without rapid restoration of encrypted data.

Google Vault is not a  
backup and restore solution.

—

To learn how to protect your  
G Suite data, visit [Spanning.com](https://spanning.com),  
and follow us on [LinkedIn](#)  
or [Twitter](#).

—



# SPANNING

Spanning is a leading provider of SaaS data protection solutions, helping organizations to protect and manage their information in the cloud. We provide powerful, enterprise-class backup and recovery for G Suite, Salesforce, and Office 365. Spanning Backup is the most trusted cloud-to-cloud backup solution for thousands of companies and millions of users around the world.

501 CONGRESS AVE, SUITE 200  
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701  
P 512.236.1277

[SPANNING.COM](http://SPANNING.COM)