

Product Spotlight

Is There a Cloud Caching Appliance for SMBs? - Morro



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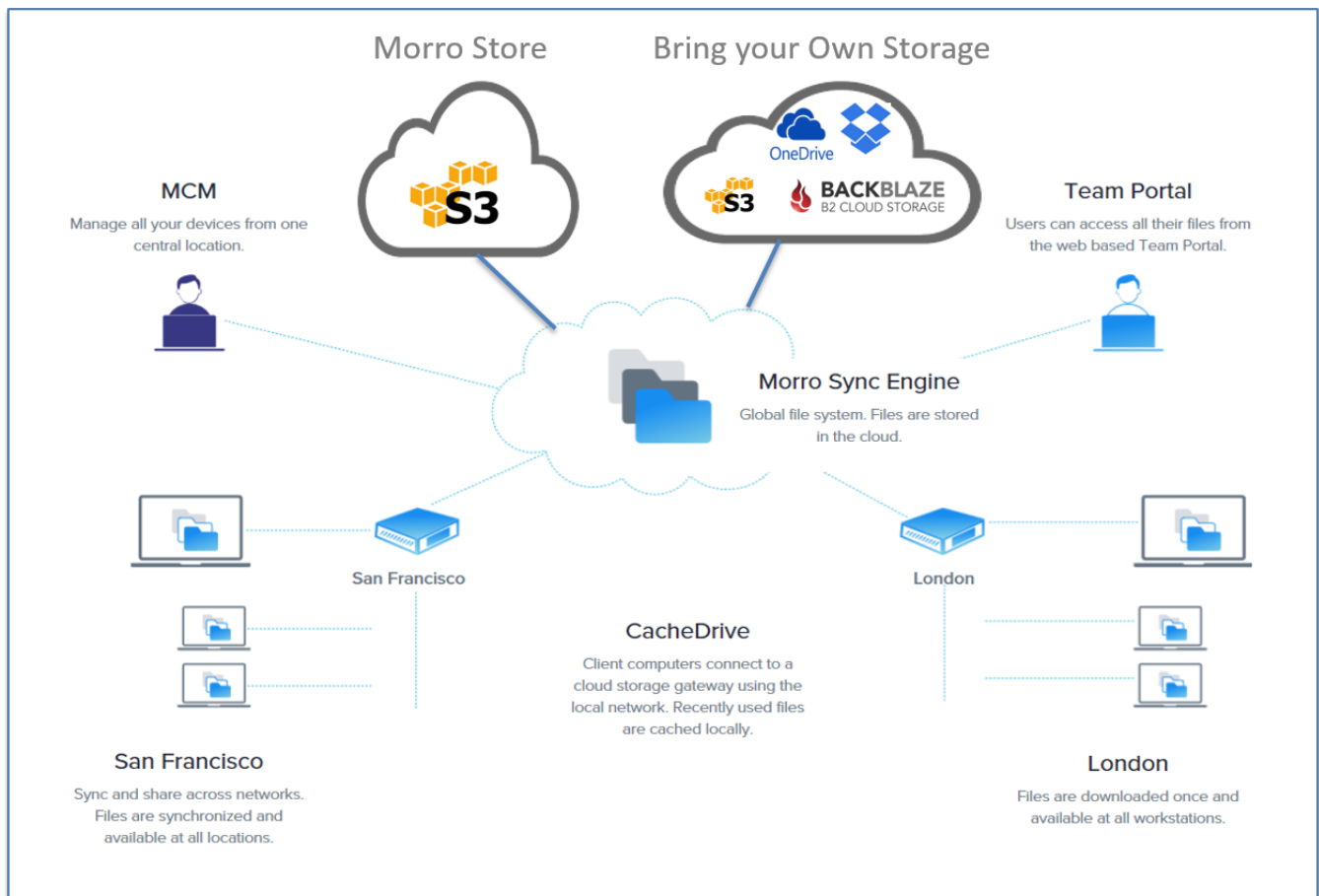
There are a number of appliances that are designed to give you the benefits of the cloud with the performance of local storage. We tend to call these products cloud gateways or cloud caching appliances.

The idea is that the cloud is the ultimate repository for the data, and the cloud caching appliance holds the most recent copy of the data. Multiple appliances can be used to create a single namespace across multiple locations, allowing the sharing of files between those locations. The only challenge with almost all of these solutions is they are engineered for the middle and large enterprise, not for SMBs.

Morro Data's CacheDrive is a product that is designed to be a cloud caching appliance for SMBs. It works very similar to larger appliances from companies like Nasuni and Panzura, where you install an appliance wherever you would like quick access to your cloud data. Users interface with the appliance through SMB, and it immediately replicates to the cloud all data sent to the appliance. It also automatically removes files from the cache as necessary to make room for new data. With data being replicated to cloud on the fly, backup is inherent and autonomous. File versioning is also supported.

In a multi-location configuration, files created in one location are not automatically replicated to another location. A user who accesses a file created in another environment will find that file automatically transferred into their cache. It is also possible to support prefetching, where a particular directory can be told to always replicate all its data to all locations or select locations. Morro designed this feature to support workflows where files are always shared across multiple locations and for large file transfers. All files are visible in the single global namespace.

Multiple sites appear as a single distributed system and all sites, shares and users are centrally managed through a single pane of glass.



Originally designed to work with S3-based cloud products, Morro found itself presented with a lot of customers who were using Dropbox and OneDrive and wanted to continue doing so for a variety of reasons, but would also like to have the cloud caching features and upload acceleration benefit of using Morro. By syncing one or more Dropbox accounts to the Morro appliance, all the customer's on-prem end users can access that appliance via SMB and get local performance, which can aid broader adoption of Dropbox across the organization. Morro also supports this functionality with OneDrive.

One interesting feature of the Morro file system is files that are available in the file system, but are only present in the cloud, are still viewable as stub files in the local file system. The stub files contain the complete metadata needed to search against these files, and customers can search against these files and run other processing against them without causing them to be pulled down from the cloud into the cache.

A single CacheDrive G40 costs only \$499, and includes enough cache to support 1 TB of the most current data in the cloud. Customers then purchase a monthly Morro storage plan that starts at \$49 per gateway and includes 1 TB of storage in the cloud. This is *significantly* less expensive than a typical cloud caching appliance. Dropbox, OneDrive and Backblaze users bring their existing storage and have even lower cost subscription plans.

How does Morro compare to the larger, higher performance solutions that started this market? If Morro and one of these other companies is competing for the same account, one of them is wasting their time. Morro is not attempting to compete with the larger cloud-cache or gateway vendors; it is trying to fill a niche that these other companies do not.

StorageSwiss Take

The concept of a cloud caching appliance is a solid one. The only limitation to date has been that they typically are too expensive for small organizations. The introduction of a product that seems to behave a lot like its more expensive brethren – with a price point of under \$1000 (at the time of this publication) – is a welcome one. The added benefit of accessing Dropbox or OneDrive storage through a NAS interface is a bonus.

About Morro Data



Morro Data has developed the world's first multisite hybrid CloudNAS and cloud storage gateway architecture for the SMB. Files are stored in the cloud, cached on-prem and synced globally with a single namespace. It's the best of both worlds: cloud reliability and scale with local performance across offices. The Morro Data service is a simple-to-use, yet powerful, multi-site, cloud based file system storage and data transfer solution for businesses of all sizes. Their vision is to help businesses migrate data to the cloud while maintaining the same level of performance and compatibility as local file servers. For more information, visit <http://www.morrodta.com>

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