Cobalt Iron Frequently Asked Questions

System Management

What ongoing support is recommended for customers (i.e. monthly reviews, reports, etc.)?

Cobalt Iron provides daily and weekly reports. This is customizable to what the customer wants. We recommend weekly reviews of overall service status and health.

What ongoing governance is recommended?

We recommend quarterly service reviews with customers to validate data protection coverage, solution ticket review, and footprint growth observations. At the same time we look at growth and expansion options to validate current plan and contract or revise up.

Is there any integration capability with the Cobalt Iron Commander and ticket systems?
Can you integrate with a customer provisioning/ticketing system like ServiceNow?

Yes, all activities and services are driven with Cobalt Iron's RESTful APIs. This enables data sourcing, feeds, and automation for customer landscapes. Additionally, Cobalt Iron provides and supports integration into customer systems for workflows. ServiceNow is a current integration that we support at customer sites today.

Are regular health checks part of Cobalt Iron data protection?

Yes, with high frequency.

Services and Sizing

How do we size the Cobalt Iron Accelerator? Based on data footprint for backup or storage capacity?

All Cobalt Iron Accelerators are sized based on workload characteristics: stored data, system counts, and operational performance requirements.

For what footprint threshold can backup/restore be performed over the WAN versus having an Accelerator on-site?

Backup and restore performance are completely bandwidth, data volume, and RTO sensitive. The specific data volumes and required bandwidth will be determined by customer requirements and SLAs.

Is there a high availability (redundancy) option with Cobalt Iron Compass™?

Yes, Cobalt Iron delivers this as a custom solution today to ensure the HA requirements are well defined and met.

Can we perform many-to-one replication?
How about bi-directional replication with two locations?

Many-to-one: Yes
Bi-directional: Yes

How do we handle long term retention?
Is tape integration possible?

We have an LTR offering that can leverage cloud storage, Cleversafe, tape integration, and flexible Spectrum Protect licensing options.

What are the encryption options (in-flight / at rest)?

Cobalt Iron offers diverse encryption options including:

- Source system Spectrum Protect client encryption
- In-flight encryption with generated SSL keys or customer-issued SSL keys
- At-rest encryption on-premises and in-cloud

Can we have different retention policies with a two-site replication?

Yes, Cobalt Iron delivers this today. It is a ticket request to ensure customer recovery matches expectations.

What is the level (ratio) of compression and deduplication?
Is it client-side deduplication or deduplication on the Cobalt Iron Accelerator?

Compression and deduplication are data sensitive. Currently Cobalt Iron has combined rates ranging from 1:1 to 20+:1. Compression and deduplication are available at both the client-side and Accelerator-side.

When is the service billed?

Invoicing/billing is on first of every month.

How are customers charged for Cobalt Iron Data Protection (CIDP) when they exceed their estimated protected data?

Customers are charged per terabyte at their contracted price.

Is there an additional cost for implementation?

Accelerator hardware is delivered production ready. Knowledge transfer for the end user to self-deploy clients/agents is included in the base price. Additional deployment support is available from business partners or Cobalt Iron at an additional charge.

Can Cobalt Iron help me determine an estimated time for full restore?

Yes. Contact Cobalt Iron to discuss your specific situation.

Is the listed capacity of the Accelerators raw or deduplicated?

The stated capacity of the Accelerators is not raw. It is usable compressed, deduplicated footprint.

Can Cobalt Iron provide protection for System i?

Cobalt Iron can provide protection for System i customers who are also using BRMS. BRMS is a component of the IBM i operating system. Most regularly, we see System i customers are already licensed for it. BMRS is required for Cobalt Iron to provide Compass on System i.

Backup and Restore

Can Cobalt Iron integrate to a NAS for direct backup?

Yes. Cobalt Iron supports both NDMP backups as well as recommended proxy backups for flexible restore, data availability, and access.

Do you need client agents installed for DBs and Exchange?

For application integration, yes. For monolithic recovery, VM and physical snapshots can be leveraged.

Can granular restore be performed for DB and Exchange mailbox?

Yes, all Spectrum Protect features for supported databases and Exchange are available to customers.

Is the OS also backed up? Can we do a BMR backup / restore on dissimilar hardware?

Yes, by default the OS is backed-up. BMR basics are included via process steps. Cristie BMR can be added to simplify process and steps.

Is there an instant restore feature (e.g. mounting of drives) similar to TSM and Actifio?

Yes

For VMware, does Cobalt Iron leverage VMware VADP and CBT for agentless backup solution? Are there any requirements or additional infrastructure components for agentless backups? Where will the VM snapshot reside?

Yes, Cobalt Iron leverages Spectrum Protect for VE which uses VADP APIs and CBT for agentless backups. Additional requirements are the data mover VMs. VM snapshots reside on the VMFS datastores during the backup phase and then on the Accelerator for future instant recovery and restore activities.

How is the restore performed? Is there integration with Virtual Center Server?

Recoveries can be performed from both command line and GUI using the vCenter integration or web GUI.

Is there any SLA or SLO (e.g. successful backup percent)? Response time?

The solution for a customer is designed to meet the SLA, RPO, RTO, and performance requirements.

What is the standard backup window?

Eight hours, unless otherwise requested

What is the standard replication window?

Eight hours, unless otherwise requested

During a DR test can replication and restore happen simultaneously?

Yes