Bezirksamt Steglitz-Zehlendorf gets Absolute Immutability and cuts backup workload 50% with Object First

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With Object First, we can now guarantee what our old backup target couldn't: the immutability of our backup data. We're now fully protected from ransomware attacks.

Matthias Altensleben
Head of IT at Bezirksamt Steglitz-Zehlendorf

BERLIN
Bezirksamt
Steglitz-Zehlendorf

Introduction & Executive Summary

Bezirksamt Steglitz-Zehlendorf (BSZ) is a municipal organization based in south-west Berlin, Germany. With over 2000 employees, it's responsible for a range of local government services for over 300,000 citizens in the district—from handling ID card applications, to making social security payments and approving building permits.

As an organization that handles large amounts of personal data, BSZ is bound by a range of stringent data security regulations. When management upgraded its internal IT requirements to incorporate backup data immutability, the team needed to move quickly.

The appeal of backup storage with built-in immutability and simplified management ultimately convinced BSZ to work with Object First.

The Challenge

Before implementing Object First, BSZ relied on a combination of a Dell EMC and Dell SC as primary backup storage. This resulted in two key issues:

- **A lack of advanced security features** such as immutability, putting the wider organisation—and its services—at risk from the effects of ransomware attacks

- **Non-compliance** with both internal IT standards and external regulations, creating an urgent need to upgrade infrastructure

While the organization had never faced a ransomware attack or any other issues with its existing backup storage, the potential impact of an attack—the interruption of local government services to over 300,000 citizens—was unthinkable.

To mitigate this risk, BSZ started its search for a new backup storage solution that would incorporate advanced security features, particularly immutability, while simplifying management processes.

Company:
Bezirksamt Steglitz-Zehlendorf

Industry:
Local government

Country:
Germany

Solution:
Ootbi by Object First

Results:
Ransomware-proof primary backup, 50% reduced backup workload

The Solution

BSZ evaluated various different solutions in its search for immutable primary backup storage. However, in their initial investigations, no vendor featured offered Absolute Immutability—zero access to destructive actions—meaning data could ultimately still be compromised by bad actors.

According to Mathias Altensleben, Head of IT at BSZ, it was their long-standing IT Partner, interface systems, who first suggested a solution that **did** offer Absolute Immutability: Ootbi (Out-of-the-Box Immutability) by Object First.

"Interface systems recommended Object First as a possible solution for our IT issues, so we looked into it together—and found it offered all the necessary qualities of immutability at a price that was more than fair."

The project started with a simple proof of concept. The test was overseen by Martin Gerlach, Head of Sales at interface systems, and it ran without a hitch: *"We set up a proof of concept with the customer, tested it, and everything just worked."*

Following this proof of concept, BSZ decided to purchase three Ootbi nodes.

The implementation proceeded quickly and smoothly: the nodes were installed by BSZ themselves, while interface systems oversaw the process and offered assistance throughout.

Altensleben notes, *"Interface System really helped us a lot during the implementation phase, responding quickly to any questions we had. I should say, however, that the implementation was so smooth that very few questions actually came up!"*

Altensleben was extremely satisfied with the process, noting, *"We've never had a backup solution implemented so fast."*

The Results

By implementing Ootbi from Object First, BSZ was able to address its key storage challenges:

- **Immutable storage** ensures backups remain protected from tampering or deletion, providing a **strong safeguard** against ransomware threats.
- **Rapid recovery speeds** ensure BSZ continues to provide essential services if an incident should arise.
- **Robust security** ensures compliance with internal IT standards as well as broader personal data protection regulations.

The transition also had another tangible benefit. Altensleben explains: *"Object First significantly improved my team's workload. Previously, two people were responsible for backups—one for software, one for the storage itself. Now, with Object First's streamlined system management, we only need one person to handle everything related to backups."*

Conclusion

By implementing Object First's Ootbi appliance, BSZ addressed its data security challenges and achieved its fundamental aim: backup storage with Absolute Immutability that protects personal data from ransomware and other threats. All while reducing its management overhead.

Altensleben reaffirmed: *"Object First is the right solution for us because it offers all the benefits of immutability at a very reasonable price."*

The relationship between BSZ and Object First is set to continue into the future, too. According to Altensleben, *"We're really happy to have Object First and interface systems by our side as partners—enabling us to meet the all-important requirement of maintaining service operations."*