Blue Heron
DIGITAL SERVICES

blueherondsds.com · support@blueherondsds.com
(863) 279-0817 · Mon–Fri 9 AM–5:30 PM ET

The Cloud Bill Checklist

20 places Azure and AWS bills leak money, with one plain line on how to check each one. Tick them off with your team. Most need only read access to your cost and resource views.

COMPUTE

- [ ] **1. Idle virtual machines**
  Azure Advisor → Cost shows underused VMs. In AWS, open Compute Optimizer or Trusted Advisor and look for low-utilization EC2 instances.
- [ ] **2. Oversized VM and instance sizes**
  Check average CPU and memory over the last 30 days in Azure Monitor or CloudWatch. If a server rarely gets busy, try the next size down.
- [ ] **3. Dev and test running after hours**
  Turn on Auto-shutdown on Azure dev VMs, or use AWS Instance Scheduler, so non-production systems stop nights and weekends.
- [ ] **4. Older-generation sizes**
  Compare each VM series or EC2 family with the current generation. Newer sizes often cost the same or less for the same work.
- [ ] **5. Empty App Service plans**
  In Azure, list App Service plans and open each one. A plan with zero apps still bills every hour.

STORAGE AND BACKUPS

- [ ] **6. Unattached disks**
  Azure portal → Disks, filter Disk state = Unattached. AWS → EC2 → Volumes, filter State = available.
- [ ] **7. Old snapshots**
  Sort Azure Snapshots and AWS EBS Snapshots (Owned by me) by date. Ask who needs anything older than your retention policy.
- [ ] **8. Storage on the wrong tier**
  Set Azure Blob lifecycle rules, or S3 lifecycle rules or Intelligent-Tiering, to move rarely read data to cheaper tiers.
- [ ] **9. gp2 volumes on AWS**
  In EC2 → Volumes, filter Volume type = gp2. Moving to gp3 is usually cheaper and can be done without downtime.
- [ ] **10. Backup retention longer than needed**
  Review retention in Azure Recovery Services vaults and AWS Backup plans. Match it to what your business or compliance rules require.

NETWORK

- [ ] **11. Unused public IP addresses**
  Azure → Public IP addresses, look for ones not linked to a resource. AWS → Elastic IPs, look for ones not associated. Both bill while idle.
- [ ] **12. Idle load balancers and gateways**
  Open each load balancer, Application Gateway or NAT gateway and confirm it still has healthy backends and real traffic.
- [ ] **13. Data transfer (egress) costs**
  In Azure Cost analysis, group by meter and look for Bandwidth. In AWS Cost Explorer, filter usage type for DataTransfer. Find which service sends the traffic.

DISCOUNTS AND LICENSING

- [ ] **14. Reservation and savings plan coverage**
  Azure Advisor and Cost Management show reservation recommendations. AWS Cost Explorer shows Savings Plans and Reserved Instance coverage and recommendations.
- [ ] **15. Expiring commitments**
  List the end dates of your reservations and savings plans. Decide on renewals before they lapse back to on-demand pricing.
- [ ] **16. Azure Hybrid Benefit**
  If you own Windows Server or SQL Server licenses with Software Assurance, check whether Hybrid Benefit is turned on for eligible VMs and databases.

MONITORING, DATA AND CONTROL

- [ ] **17. Log retention and ingestion**
  Check retention and daily ingestion on each Log Analytics workspace. In CloudWatch, look for log groups set to Never expire.
- [ ] **18. Idle databases**
  Look for Azure SQL databases or RDS instances with few or no connections. Stop, shrink or move them to a serverless tier if they qualify.
- [ ] **19. Forgotten regions, accounts and subscriptions**
  Group costs by region and by subscription or account. Spend in a place nobody expects is often a leftover test.
- [ ] **20. Tags and budgets**
  Make sure every resource has an owner tag, and set budgets with alerts in Azure Cost Management or AWS Budgets.

Want us to check for you? It’s free.

Upload a cost export or connect read-only at scan.blueheronds.com and get a short list of your biggest savings opportunities. Nothing in your account changes without your written OK.

Why it matters: in Flexera’s 2026 State of the Cloud Report, respondents estimated that 29% of their IaaS and PaaS spend is wasted. Source: https://www.flexera.com/about-us/press-center/flexera-finds-cloud-value-is-rising-while-ai-waste-grows

Blue Heron Digital Services, LLC · Lakeland, Florida, serving clients nationwide.