What we found looking at 300+ cloud marketplace listings

August 2026. Independent research, not affiliated with AWS or Microsoft.

We spent two weeks measuring the third-party OSS listing market across AWS and Azure — 102 AWS listings walked by hand, 6,010 Azure SKUs pulled through the catalog API, plus filed company accounts from five jurisdictions. Below is what surprised us. Numbers are from primary sources; where we could not verify, we say so.

---

1. The review count on a listing is not the listing's review count

AWS blends reviews of the *base product* into individual listings, and serves the same reviews to different sellers.

Two listings, two different publishers, same base OS:

```
Supported Images       — ECS-Optimized Amazon Linux 2023   46 reviews
Center for Internet…   — CIS Hardened Image L1 on AL2023   46 reviews

identical titles and dates, different IDs:
  'Integrated cloud services have reduced our operati…'   2026-07-02
  'Reliable support and updated images have streamlin…'   2026-07-01
```

The syndicated ones carry a non-empty `ExternalReviewId` and are formatted as PeerSpot content. Native reviews — written on AWS Marketplace, about that listing — have `ExternalReviewId == null`.

Scale: of 485 reviews shown across 203 infrastructure listings, 73 were native. 15%. The inflation is concentrated on popular base images.

Practical consequence: if you have been benchmarking yourself against a competitor's review count, you have probably been comparing against a number that belongs to neither of you.

Azure does not do this. We checked the same two publishers there: 1,168 native reviews across 16 publishers produced 1,168 unique IDs and zero cross-publisher overlap. Azure tags syndicated content with an explicit `source` field and keeps it out of the listing counter.

Azure has a different problem instead, and it seems only fair to say so. Of those 1,168 native reviews, 773 — 66% — are reused templates drawn from a pool of 151 texts, one per listing, spread across hundreds of duplicate SKUs. Two publishers draw from the same pool, and one of them lists an offer whose support URL points at the other's domain. That is sellers inflating their own counts rather than the platform doing it, and it is found by comparing texts within a catalog rather than by any API field.

Net of both: a review counter on either platform tells you very little.

---

2. A public listing costs 20% on AWS and 3% on Azure and GCP

PUBLIC LISTING	AWS	AZURE	GCP
Service fee	**20%**	**3%**	**3%**
Private offer < $1M	3%	3%	3%

Sources: Microsoft Partner Center (ms.date 2026-07-22) — *"Microsoft charges a 3% standard store service fee"*; Google Cloud Marketplace revenue share schedule (effective 2025-04-21) — Standard Offer leaves 97% with the seller; AWS listing fees — *"Server (AMI, container, and ML) – 20%"*.

At $99/month that is $79.20 net on AWS against $96.03 on Azure.

There is a second-order effect that matters more than the headline. On AWS the 3% rate is reachable only through private offers, and private offers are incompatible with monthly billing — so you choose between a simple monthly price and the lower rate. On Azure the 3% applies to an ordinary public listing at any pricing model. The fork is an AWS-specific tax, not a property of the business.

One hypothesis we tested and disproved: Azure is **not** 0% for hourly VMs. Zero applies to BYOL only, where Microsoft does not transact.

3. Catalog sizes are much larger than the AWS view suggests

AWS gives no public catalog API. Azure does, and it paginates — miss `nextPageLink` and you undercount by 1.5x to 4x. Actual sizes, August 2026:

PUBLISHER	AZURE SKUS
cloudimg	1,222
kCloudHub	873
Apps4Rent	806
Supported Images	489
ProComputers	345
Virtual Pulse	323
Cloud Infrastructure Services	257
Ntegral	188
Tidal Media	175

Median of the cohort: 182 SKUs.

Tier 3–4 offerings — an actual deployed stack rather than a bare image — are 0.7% of the Azure cohort: 41 `AzureApplication` offers out of 6,010. The one publisher who invested there (Cognosys, 25 offers) abandoned the catalog eighteen months ago. The AWS picture matches: 93 of 102 listings we walked are bare AMIs.

4. Operational rules that are easy to miss

From AWS documentation, all of which we hit while planning our own entry:

- **The seller account welds to the legal entity permanently.** *"Once you

register as a seller and list a product, you can't change the account associated with your products."* Each seller account requires a unique legal business name.

- **75 public AMI listings per seller**, and above that limit sellers are

"subject to periodic performance review and may be required to restrict underperforming listings", with limit increases granted and revoked *"at its sole discretion"*.

- **AMIs must not be older than two years from creation date.** At a full

portfolio that is roughly 37 forced rebuilds a year with no new customers attached to any of them.

- **Refunds happen without seller consent**: 100% within 48 hours of purchase,

free-trial conversions within 7 days, and AWS may determine the amount itself on bulk metering errors.

- **Obligations outlive the product.** Delisting keeps minimum 90-day

commitments, and existing subscribers retain access until they cancel.

5. What filed accounts show

Five repackagers publish enough for their trajectory to be read.

COMPANY	JURISDICTION	CATALOG	WHAT THE FILINGS SHOW	STAFF
ProComputers SRL	Romania	345	turnover 0 through 2019, peak **13.10M RON (~€2.65M) in 2022**, **0 in 2025**	0–1
Cloud Infrastructure Services Ltd	UK	257	net assets £28,764 (2017) → **£169,679 (2025)**	1
CTSUK (cloudimg)	UK	1,222	net assets **£39,607**, FY2022 profit **£1,977**	2
Virtual Pulse s.r.o.	Czechia	323	turnover ≈**€53k**, three years of losses, equity **–7k CZK**	2
Jetware S.R.L.	Italy	—	turnover **€1,497 → €1,071**, at a loss	**0**

Caveat worth stating: net-asset growth is a floor on income, not revenue, and dividends and director salary are unknown. In the UK case the 2023 jump largely clears a tax and social security liability rather than representing that year's income.

6. Two departures worth knowing about

Bitnami left AWS Marketplace on 2026-06-10 (brownout 2026-06-01), and its free public catalog closed 2025-08-28. The largest repackager in the history of this market never charged end users — its listings were $0.00/hr for software, and the founder has said the cloud providers paid. The replacement, Bitnami Secure, is reported at $50–72k/year.

Tackle.io was acquired by AppDirect on 2025-12-01 after a $100M Series C.

---

7. What the best-performing adjacent operator actually earns

Elestio runs managed open source — 400+ applications across nine cloud providers, with support priced publicly at $0, $50 and $200 per service per month. Its Irish accounts are filed. For the period from incorporation to 31 December 2024:

	€
Profit for the period	**195,462**
Shareholders' funds	196,462
Cash at bank	264,043
Creditors under one year	(69,871)
Called-up share capital	1,000, **unpaid**
Employees	**0**
Turnover	**not disclosed**

Unaudited, FRS 102 Section 1A, no fixed assets on the balance sheet at all. ELESTIO LIMITED, CRO 755058, incorporated 04/01/2024.

Two things this settles and one it does not.

Settled: no outside money. Unpaid share capital, €785 of bank debt, no member loans, no share premium. Bootstrapped, from the document rather than from a claim.

Settled: the order of magnitude. This is the strongest result we found anywhere. Cloud Infrastructure Services took nine years to reach comparable equity with one employee. Elestio got there in one — and it is still a couple of hundred thousand euros of profit, not millions, off 400 applications and published $50/$200 support tiers.

Not settled: whose economics these are. Zero employees against a leadership page listing ten people across eight countries, trade creditors of €31,575, and no fixed assets do not obviously square with the founder's public mention of several thousand VMs at Hetzner. Either staff and infrastructure are paid as contractor invoices inside a P&L the abridged form omits, or part of the operation sits in another entity. The company has traded since 2022 and the Irish entity dates from 2024, so where the earlier years lived is not visible. Read the figure as what passed through this entity in its first period, not as what the business earns.

---

8. What the channel is actually for

The most useful thing we read was not in a document. From r/aws, on whether people use AWS Marketplace at all — the top comment, at 196 points: *"People, hardly ever. Corporations and Enterprise, all the time."*

And from Corey Quinn in the same thread: *"much more about procurement processes at companies and (occasionally) retiring committed spend to meet contractual requirements than it ever is about product discovery."*

A seller asking in January 2026 whether the marketplace produced net-new leads or only closed deals already in flight was told it *"rarely creates true net new demand on its own"*, that teams *"overestimate the discovery aspect"*, and that the same holds on Google Cloud and Azure.

Buyers are materially incentivised to transact through it — committed-spend drawdown, quarterly marketplace credits, cashback — which is a real reason to be listed. Just not the reason most sellers list.

---

9. Two things we could not find out

Whether AWS restricts selling the same product outside the marketplace. The Seller Terms sit behind a login. The public Seller FAQ, 1,295 lines, has no match for `parity`, `most favored` or `exclusiv`. If you have read the signed terms, we would genuinely like to know.

Whether there is any lever to enforce payment for software running in a customer's own account. There appears to be none — not for us, not for Nuon, not through Service Catalog. The only recourse is to stop shipping updates. If you have solved this, that is the single most valuable thing you could tell us.

Where this came from, and what we want

We were evaluating whether to build a business publishing packaged open source on AWS Marketplace. The research above is why we stopped to check first.

We are not selling anything. We would like fifteen minutes with people who actually operate listings, to ask three questions:

1. Did the channel ever bring you a customer you did not already have? 2. What does the operational load actually cost you per listing per year? 3. If you had to start again, would you?

Happy to share the full underlying data — the listing census, the catalog extraction method, the review-filtering approach — with anyone who finds it useful, whether or not you want to talk.
