Beyond Send and Receive:

Archiving email has become business critical

An ArcMail Technology Research Paper

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Introduction

For many people, using email is really about only two things; send and receive. The simple act of typing a few words, attaching a file and hitting "send" has become second nature; almost to a fault as grammar, punctuation and spelling has taken a back seat to speed and convenience. Email has become more popular than the telephone, and has certainly made it easier for people to track who said what and when. Combine the fact that the "average email user checks mail about five times a day"[i] with the simplicity of accessing email from literally any Internet-enabled device, and it may be appropriate to say that we have become addicted to email.

In the eyes of IT departments around the world, email is much more than a simple exchange of words, and for employers, this addiction with email has created a number of new challenges. Email has become the communications tool that has changed the way we do business allowing marketing ideas to be groomed, contracts to be negotiated and dispersed, projects teams to collaborate more effectively. Email is also playing an important role in corporate litigation, is helping to validate a company's efforts to meet industry and regulatory requirements, and has become a database for important information and files.

Driven by the growing importance and amount of email, as well as the wealth of information being exchanged and stored in email archives, companies are reevaluating the way they store email so that the data can be managed, easily searched and used for future success.

Traditional Email Storage

The In a March 2007 Reuters' article, David Filo, co-founder of Yahoo, made the comment, "People should think about e-mail as something where they are archiving their lives."[ii] As evidenced by Yahoo's unlimited email storage offer to its quarter of a billion email users, storage capabilities and capacities have grown astronomically. When Yahoo launched its email program more than a decade ago, users were given a total of 4 MB of storage space. Today, 4 MB of storage would not be enough for even a quarter of what the average corporate email account receives each day or even one typical Powerpoint presentation. According to the Radicati Group, the average corporate email account receives 18 MB of mail and attachments per day[iii], and that figure is projected to grow to 28 MB a day by 2011.[iv]

For most email users, email storage and archiving is the filing system on the left-hand side of their Outlook application, or answering "yes" to the Outlook pop-up window that asks "Would you like to auto-archive?" Does anyone really know where this data goes? Typically, this data is "archived" to the local PC and in the event of a hard drive crash, the archived .pst file stored on the local hard drive, which is seldom backed up, could be gone. For these same users, email recovery consists of restoring the .pst file or searching the deleted items folder with hopes that the file that was accidentally deleted did not get dumped as a result of an automatic purge.

Traditional backup software has been deployed to replicate local hard drives and store copies of the emails on network servers. The data on the servers is then backed up on tape drives. Unfortunately, backup tapes have come under fire recently for a number of reasons, including cost, difficulty of management, potential for human error and the extensive process for searching and recovering data, especially when one has to recover data over a given time period; this often means restoring multiple tapes which takes considerable time. One of the most infamous examples of the challenges with recovering information from backup tapes involved a Phen-Fen lawsuit with Wyeth and its sister company, A.H. Robins Inc. The plaintiff in the case requested to review emails from specific individuals within the company. After evaluating the cost and labor required to recover the emails, the company decided to settle the lawsuit rather than pay the estimated $1.7 million in discovery costs.

While these types of storage, archiving and recovery may have been sufficient when email storage limits were 4 MB and dial-up connections made sending large attachments difficult, the average size

of emails and attachments is growing. And just as email technology and bandwidth have improved, so have the role of email in the workplace and the types of information being exchanged. In fact, according to the Gartner Group roughly 60 percent of business critical information is stored in email.[v] What other ubiquitous means is there to send a file from one person to another, whether inside or outside the organization?

What is Business Critical?

When it comes to email, perhaps the better question is, "what is not business critical?" Email has become the 21st century filing cabinet storing everything from sales presentations to contracts to threaded discussions on major issues. Emails with attachments are usually saved in files while the attachments may be saved to local and/or network folders. If stored only on the local drive or kept within the email, it may not be backed up, leaving the information unprotected, and unsearchable or usable by others in the company. In the event that a hard drive crashes or local files become corrupt, the information could be lost forever.

Recently, the White House was sued by National Security Archive because, as the lawsuit claims, "the White House abandoned an automatic archiving system for its e-mail in 2002 and did not replace it." As a result there were days when some email was preserved and other days when no email was preserved. The group is looking to recover more than 5 million lost emails.[vi] In September 2006, Wachovia Capital Markets was fined $2.25 million by the New York Stock Exchange for failing to retain certain emails through appropriate backup and failure to monitor or supervise the backup process as directed by Section 17(a) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934. Earlier in 2006 Merrill Lynch was fined $15 million by the Securities and Exchange3 Commission for not saving email properly, which was on top of a $1 billion fine imposed on the company for "failing to produce e-mail evidence in a timely manner as part of the discovery phase of a highly publicized civil trial."[vii]

The true definition of business critical is really dependent on the company or organization. When it comes to protecting the company from possible litigation, ensuring compliance with specific industry or government regulations or simply protecting and archiving the information so that it can be used for the benefit of the organization, business critical should be defined as everything that is sent or received. How can one know ahead of time which email will or won't be required in a discovery in the future?

Effective Email Archiving

Because of the importance of email and the significance of the information contained within local email boxes across the enterprise, there are a number of key requirements that companies should look for in an email archiving solution. The remainder of this white paper will focus on four of them.

- Automatic and immediate archiving and indexing of all emails and attachments
- Affordable, easy to install, configure, maintain and use
- Fast, easy search and restoration of emails and attachments
- Accessible through the Web and does not require the email client to view the archive

Automatic and immediate archiving and indexing of all emails and attachments

The truth is, you never know when you will need a specific email or if an organization will need it as part of a discovery process. Just ask Pinkard Construction* who saved their company $25,000 by producing one email from their archive – twice the cost of the ArcMail Defender they purchased only months before. As was mentioned above, the act of sending and receiving email is second nature. It is important that an organization does not get casual with the act of backing up and cataloging

emails. Any archiving solution should automatically back-up all emails and their attachments, which will decrease email server load, storage and backup time and the overall impact on IT.

Storing email is also a major problem for many organizations. In fact, according Osterman Research, "email storage is the number one problem facing IT managers today. With storage needs increasing by approximately 35 percent per year, IT managers are faced with finding the best solutions to manage email volume and meet archiving requirements for compliance."[viii] By deploying an archiving solution with built-in storage, organizations can help to reduce the strain on mail servers.

Affordable, easy to install, configure and use

Beyond being affordable, an archiving solution should simplify the back-up and recovery process of emails. The solution should run seamlessly in the background without interrupting productivity or impacting network resources. Administrators should be able to manage the solution, including policies, access rights and role-based permissions from any location, while allowing users convenient, secure access to search and restore files.

Fast, easy Search and restoration of emails and attachments

Backup is one thing; the ability to search and restore emails is entirely different process that has been difficult with many legacy systems. Tape backup systems have been notoriously unreliable and difficult to work with. Managing tapes, as well as searching for files, is time consuming, and tapes are also vulnerable to theft, damage or loss. Companies should look for an archiving solution that simplifies the process of finding and restoring emails and attachments. Comprehensive search capabilities, such as full text and wild-card searches, as well as one-click restore can help reduce the amount of time it takes users to recover important documents. In many legal cases involving e-discovery, time was critical both in terms of overall cost of the process and meeting court mandated time frames. In the Phen-Fen lawsuit, it was the anticipated time and cost of the discovery process that ultimately led the defendant to settle the case.

Accessible through the Web

Finally, any backup device should be accessible through the Web and not tied into a particular email client that limits access from other machines or devices that are not running the email client. Administrators or end users should be able to find and retrieve the information they need and provide access to email from anywhere there's a Web connection, including web enabled mobile devices such as Palm Treos. Recent natural disasters, as well as events such as a health scare, technology outage, security breach or lost computers, are forcing organizations to reevaluate their current disaster recovery plans. For many of these events, employees may be displaced and not be able to work from their primary offices. It is important that both administrators and end-users be able to access archived emails from wherever they are working, whether a traveling sales person using their web enabled mobile device or laptop, or an IT director who is working from home due to weather problems.

ArcMail Technology

Defender by ArcMail Technology is an email archiving and storage solution in a single, easy-to-use appliance. Defender features on-board storage, comprehensive archiving, data compression, risk management software and easy-to-use Web-based search and retrieve functions. With the ArcMail Defender, IT administrators will not have to install or manage anything else to provide complete email archiving functionality for the enterprise.

Because everything is integrated into a single appliance, set-up is as simple as standard network configurations and setting the journaling function on the organization's mail server. Once Defender is set up, the device automatically captures, indexes and stores each email without any ongoing IT or end-user intervention. IT administrators can run daily status and real-time exception reports to monitor performance and compatibility with Active Directory. Management of Defender is done through

an intuitive Web-based interface, which simplifies the find and retrieve process for administrators and end-users from literally anywhere there is a web connection.

Conclusion

Archiving email has become a critical business function as organizations grow more and more dependent on electronic communications to run their businesses. Traditional email archiving and storage solutions have become obsolete as the speed of business, size of email communications, looming threats from mother nature and unexpected disasters, and demand for easy access to data has forced organizations to take a hard look at the role of email and the importance of the embedded and attached data. As businesses pursue alternative solutions for their email archiving and storage needs, they should look for a solution that can satisfy the search speed, storage, speed and access requirements of today's email users. The ideal solution is one that combines automatic archiving with broad, local storage, simplified management and comprehensive search and recovery functionality. One such solution is the Defender by ArcMail Technology.

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[i] http://www.mpdailyfix.com/2007/08/americans_more_addicted_to_ema.html
[ii] http://www.iht.com/articles/2007/03/28/technology/yahoo.php
[iii] http://www.radicati.com/
[iv] http://www.fastcompany.com/magazine/117/next-tech-email-is-dead.html
[v] http://www.aiim.org/article-docrep.asp?ID=30577
[vi] http://abclocal.go.com/kgo/story?section=politics&id=5638693
[vii] http://www.banktech.com/news/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=196513375
[viii] http://www.wwpi.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2243&Itemid=44

*Pinkard case study available for review at www.archmailtech.com