



Email Archiving Brings Solid Advantages

Years ago when you set up an email environment, regardless of the solution you utilized, the term archive wasn't common. Certainly backup was essential and disaster recovery a key focus point, but it isn't until recently that the concept of an archive has become a key element to modern corporate messaging solutions.

There is an increased need for email storage especially with regard to historical data and this is a situation faced by both small and medium businesses (SMBs) and larger enterprises. This has led to the practice of archiving email. The retained archival data has to be secure but cost effective and easily searchable.

Archiving goes beyond the typical short-term retention times of an email data backup, allowing discovery and extraction of data that may go back many years. Archiving is part of what's termed the "lifecycle management" of email data. The purpose of this management varies, but one key factor revolves around legal compliance, based upon regulatory laws that govern the messaging data for an organization. Companies must comply with the regulations or they may face fines, sanctions and other consequences as a result.

In addition to the scary compliance motivation there are some positive benefits that result from archive solutions that impact the corporate, administrative and end-user side to the organization that utilizes such a solution. And, when comparing the benefits offered vs. the cost involved per user to implement an archive solution it becomes somewhat of a no-brainer especially for SMBs.

Let's discuss some of the corporate, administrative and user-oriented benefits that come from a solid archive solution.

Corporate Benefits from an Archive Solution

Although we don't tout archiving as a disaster recovery solution the truth is that it certainly does provide an additional layer against the threat of data loss. It's believed that up to 75% or more of a company's mission critical information is found in email so the ability to retrieve that data quickly and easily is a key element to a company's survival. Data that typically sits in a user's Inbox and makes data backup and recovery so cost-intensive can be reduced when using an archive solution. This allows for faster backup/recovery times while still providing complete email retention.

As mentioned, regulations are in place that come with heavy penalties with regard to email data retention (amongst other forms of communication and guidelines with regard to these within a corporate setting). Some of the existing laws you may hear when discussing legal compliance and email data include Sarbanes Oxley, FRCP, HIPAA, SEC 17 and the Patriot Act. An archive solution can assist with avoiding problems with regulatory compliance.

In addition, a solid archive solution can assist with legal disputes that may require discovery with the need to provide complete, uninterrupted (or interfered with) communications of one or more persons within your company. Corporations, especially those that revolve around sensitive data in the financial sectors or medical sectors and so forth, live in fear of some form of litigation. Having a tamper-proof archive solution allows a company to respond quickly and efficiently in the event a lawsuit requires access to data.

Often times when a lawsuit does arise and data must be discovered the process of discovery can be exhausting both in terms of time and finances as you establish personnel to pour through what data you have and locate PST files and so forth to provide the appropriate records. Having an archive solution that allows for accelerated discovery (or eDiscovery) can save the company the frustration and monetary loss on the back-end.

All of these benefits; the more efficient data recovery, the regulatory compliance and accelerated discovery, all of these provide for economical savings both in times of relative peace from a legislative perspective and even in times of crisis because that data can be easily located, avoiding fines and such for your company.

Administrative Benefits from an Archive Solution

Some administrators may consider an archive solution to be yet another headache to worry about in a long list of messaging considerations. It's easy to understand that point of view after you mediate on the line-up of concerns from database sizes to high availability to anti-spam/virus worries and so on. A never ending list to be sure but that is to be expected of a mission critical solution. Archiving solutions do bring another element of concern into the mix but they provide a positive set of solutions to existing issues.

For example, in your current circumstance you may have end-users frustrated over quota stipulations. You probably use quotas to keep your high-performance SANs humming along smoothly and so you don't want to open-end the amount of space your users have for email they typically never look at again anyway as the years go by. So they, in turn, move email into a local PST file. This helps them stay within quota but doesn't help you as an administrator when the time comes for compliance checks or a lawsuit emerges. You are still responsible for locating that data, which may be all but impossible. It's especially impossible if data is allowed to be deleted by users prior to some form of backup taking place.

An archive solution can assist in all of these cases. Users no longer need PST files because you can place your archive solution either on cheaper disks, allowing for them to grow without worrying about the performance of your production messaging disks or you can place the archive in the cloud. The ability to have a copy of every email that flows through your organization (with the exception of emails that are absolutely spam) ensure compliance and prohibits users from just deleting sensitive data. And having a solution that allows for easy eDiscovery can not only help an administrator should a lawsuit arise, but can provide for an easy way to restore data that has been deleted. Rather than having to reach out to a

backup/recovery solution for single emails that are lost you can use your archive solution. Better yet, users can restore deleted emails themselves in much the same way they can restore from Deleted Items but in this case they won't have a 30 day limit to do so.

But again, looking at this from the administrative perspective, if you utilize an archive solution it can reduce your storage requirements as a result. And by swapping data into an archive you may even be able to release mail servers that you currently have in production because that data is elsewhere and off your on-premises storage.

Another benefit of many archive solutions is the ability to keep working and have full access to email should the on-premises solutions fail. Imagine a complete failure, but users still have some form of access to the Internet where they can log into a web-based mailbox that allows them to keep working by sending and receiving email but also has their full mailbox and archive as well. If email stops, work and profits stop as well, so having this kind of resiliency within your work environment is worth the expense and effort on the part of IT administrators.

All of these benefits; the removal of legacy email data from your production disks, the elimination of PSTs within your organization, the reduction of storage required and possibly even servers required and a fully functional backup method for folks to keep working in times of disaster and still access their archive data, all of these add up to economical advantages to an archive solution for your company.

User Benefits from an Archive Solution

We've already addressed some of the potential benefits toward users with an archive solution. For one thing they should no longer need PST files on their desktops, which typically aren't backed up and provide no real protection for that data for the users as a result. In addition, the data on their desktops is not accessible from other login points for their email messaging. As an example, if they use Outlook Web App to connect to their corporate email from another system or home they will have no access to their PST data, however, the archive solution they utilize should provide access to the archive even if they are connecting in with a browser.

Being that the disk utilized for the archive can be cheap disks it really motivates many companies and IT administrators to drop the idea of a quota and provide an unlimited archive. Granted, a quota may still be used and considered necessary but certainly having a larger archive is a bonus for users.

Users should also have the ability to search through their archive easily and restore anything that has been deleted. In some circumstances, depending on the solution chosen and the way it is implemented a user may also have the ability to delete archived email but this goes contrary to compliance concerns and invalidates the ability to respond appropriately with all data should a lawsuit arise.

All of these benefits; the ability to provide users multiple access methods to their data (both on-premises and in the cloud) where they can see the same data, the fact that quotas may no longer be necessary, the ability to search and recover emails in the archive, all of these benefits add up to economical wins for your organization.

A Review of Archive Solution Benefits

As a review of some of the key benefits to an archive solution that provides all the bells and whistles you can see from the chart that, depending on the cost that a vendor places before you, it can be an enormous stress relief for the corporate side to your organization, a tremendous helping hand to your administrative side to your organization, and a surprising productivity boost for your user side to your organization, all the while providing economical advantages when you compare the cost of the solution to the benefits it provides.

Focused Beneficiary of an Archive Solution

Corporate Benefits

- Allows for greater data recovery as a result of a smaller Inbox
- Assists in meeting regulatory compliance
- Provides access to tamper-proof data which may assist in legal disputes
- Offers accelerated discovery which is more cost effective than manual search

Administrative Benefits

- Eliminates the need for excessive quota limitations
- Avoids the need for PSTs on the user's desktops
- Helps reduce storage requirements and even reduce the number of servers necessary
- Uninterrupted email access even if the on-premises solution is down

User Benefits

- Anywhere access to their archived data
- Greater (or unlimited) space allowance without the need for PSTs
- Easy search functionality within their own archive

Having a solution that is focused entirely on archived data with simplified discovery tools that allows for full compliance with minimal setup and ongoing worry about that data is worth investigating further.

About the Author

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About MailStore Server®

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MailStore Server supports all common email infrastructures and makes it possible to implement a range of different archiving and compliance strategies. An optimal solution can therefore be tailored to each company's individual objectives and requirements. MailStore Server combines powerful technology with low costs, minimal system requirements, and an easy setup procedure.



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