ReduceMailPro
Domino Mail Management

The Upside to Active Mail Management - Five Reasons to Actively Manage Mail

Introduction

As we are all aware, the state of mail management in most organizations is not good. Most organizations have not taken the right steps toward agreeing on, implementing, and enforcing a mail management policy. Many companies do not consistently archive mail, or delete it, and there are often repositories that are not centrally managed. Thus, as the email datastore has grown exponentially, the amount of data that is lost, difficult to retrieve, maintained in a costly fashion, or not being put to its best use has grown as well. All of these problems result in lost revenue.

However, as we know, inertia is cheap; purchasing and implementing the tools to succeed in mail management are expensive. This paper will discuss five reasons to make those investments – all of which pay for themselves and put your mail datastores to their best use. They are:

- to comply with legal requirements to produce mail in litigation
- to comply with regulatory requirements to maintain mail
- to properly manage storage costs
- to help end users help themselves to lost messages and other mail-related tasks
- to utilize the information in the mail for knowledge management

Most organizations will find themselves in litigation at some point, either suing or being sued. The widespread adoption of information technology by American business means that most documents pertinent to litigation are electronic, not paper. Changes in the American legal system now require Electronically Stored Information or ESI to be produced during litigation. In short, that means that all documents relevant to the lawsuit have to be located, reviewed, and given to the opposing party.

ESI production almost always involves email. This is because email has the spontaneous, honest quality that a conversation might have and so often demonstrates a state of mind. In addition, many workers use email as project management tools. Thus the email contains many pertinent pieces of information.

A production of ESI requires a number of steps. They are:

- legal department finds out about litigation or threatened litigation
- legal department puts a legal hold in place for relevant email, preventing deletion
- legal department collects the relevant email for further analysis
- collected email is searched for keyword matches and other information; only relevant email is more closely scrutinized
- relevant email is given to the opposing party as part of the discovery process

Production of email for litigation purposes is often an expensive and difficult process. In organizations that have not implemented a mail management policy, including mail archiving, it can be difficult to simply locate all of the email. The "archiving system" in place is often back-up tape. In fact, 65% of all business organizations use back-up tape as their primary data storage method. However, back-up tape is best used for disaster recovery, not searching for content-specific emails. In addition, back-up tape is unreliable, with 39% of all organizations reporting significant data loss incidents from them. Organizations that have been using hard quotas to manage mail storage may find that workers have stored mail on thumb drives and other alternate archives which are not even know to IT. Dealing with these problems under tight court deadlines and with current staffing levels makes the ESI production exercise a nightmare. Consider these challenges:

- cost of locating the back-up tapes
- cost of loading the tapes and retrieving the content
- cost of "special handling" for tapes that have become corrupted, that use an old technology tape drive that is no longer readily available, or use several incompatible tape back-up systems

- cost to legal department of sorting through back-up tape data as opposed to searchable archive content
- cost of IT time and effort in dealing with the back-up tapes
- cost of missed documents that are discovered by the opposing party that reside on thumb drives or other alternate archives
- cost of failing to locate all relevant documents
- cost of failing to comply with court deadlines

The costs outlined above only apply to a single litigation. In other words, once that ESI production is complete, the process begins anew for the next case. No repeatable process can be put in place because the data still has not been centrally managed. Thus, the next case will present similar challenges and give very few helpful time-saving advantages. It is a mistake your organization is doomed to repeat.

Reason Number Two: Regulatory Requirements for Data Archiving

Many organizations are subject to various regulatory requirements to maintain mail. These requirements often come from lots of different regulatory agencies and require companies to retain certain types of mail for certain lengths of time. These agencies have the rights to come in to your organization to audit its compliance with these retention requirements and pertinent email must be produced for these audits.

In addition, some companies have internal compliance checks for other behavior. Often these include employment issues and intellectual property safeguards. In essence, the compliance department will often take the opportunity to review email on a regular basis to be sure that workers are not engaging in bad employment behavior or leaking valuable business information to outsiders.

Without a mail management system in place, these audits can wreak havoc on your organization. Outside auditors often require these documents to be produced for inspection on short time deadlines; failure to produce these documents can result in large fines. In addition, as with other uses of back-up tape, it can be difficult to locate the relevant information from the morass, while there is lack of certainty as to whether the tapes are available, properly maintained, and uncorrupted. This process is also non-repeatable. Thus, many organizations scramble to manage an audit only to find that a new audit will require "starting all over again." Any audit is thus a costly event, even before regulators find violations.

Reason Number Three: Management of Storage Costs

Although the costs of storage have come down significantly over the years, storage costs are still an important consideration in mail management. Storage costs of the rapidly-expanding email datastore are a component of the budget and efficiency gain in this area and can have an important impact on the bottom line.

Some important considerations in this area include:

- Hierarchical storage management and its ability to help you manage the datastore. This methodology not only saves money, it helps IT maintain and enforce a basic mail retention policy in which the least important email is maintained on the cheapest storage medium.
- Reduction of back-up times helps conserve the IT staff time and energy. 96% of all organizations backup on a daily basis. With a hierarchical storage system only a small part of the information needs to be backed up daily, older data needs to be backed up only once a month or once a year.
- Mail server performance optimization means workers will experience quicker access times to their mail. That means fewer complaints to IT and more efficient use of employee time.
- Storage management reduces the possibility of critical data being lost, misplaced, stolen or corrupted, or encrypted without the key back-up tapes. In other words, the less backup needed, the fewer places one finds the data and the less likely it is to get lost or stolen and the more likely it is to be retrievable
- If you know where the data is you know who is responsible for data breeches. Often when there is a data breech it is difficult to find out who was responsible and therefore difficult to fix the problem for the future.

Storage management can be an important reason to actively manage mail. Cost savings accrue in worker productivity and hardware investments.

Reason Number Four: End User Self-Service

A significant amount of IT staff time is often devoted to helping end users with mail issues. These issues can range from finding out why mail delivery has been stopped (perhaps due to quota usage), to searching for emails, to helping users recover email they have inadvertently deleted to researching reasons for mail delivery delay. These IT staff hours can really add up.

Usage of an archiving system can lower these costs. Because old mail is moved to less expensive storage, mail quotas can be removed resulting in significant employee time savings and fewer help desk calls. If the lower storage costs allows for full text indexing of end user mailfiles, the end users can search their mail themselves and much more efficiently than before. With a mail management system like ReduceMail Pro Archive, mail delivery delay can be monitored for each end user and more easily debugged. With ReduceMail Pro Journal, an archiving system for the domino journals, all accidentally deleted emails can be easily recovered and put back into end user mailfiles.

Reason Number Five: Knowledge Management

Email has been increasingly used for various business-critical processes beyond simply communication. Project management, contract negotiations, content development and other highly significant activities now routinely occur through email. However, companies are often unable to harness the extremely useful data that resides in the email repositories, especially if there is no email archiving in place. Consider these examples:

- If your organization is developing important intellectual property it is important to track the original discovery dates. This is easily done by email which offers a date stamped information depository. If your email is archived properly and easily retrievable, locating this important information can be simple and inexpensive. If not, you can spend hours and days trying to reconstruct the discovery timeline.

- If your organization has high turnover among employees, it is possible to limit the damage resulting from "brain drain" by transferring well organized mail information to the new employees. They can immediately take over where the old employee left off.

- If employees routinely conduct contract negotiations through email, copies of all of the contract correspondence reside in your email datastore. This can be a treasure trove of information about customers and contract terms that can be valuable for building a track record with future customers.

- Employees often generate reports, financial or otherwise, and share them through email. When the original report is misplaced and there is a need to recover the information, email can be the solution, if it is accessible.

Having the ability to retrieve content-appropriate email across the enterprise can be an important tool in managing your organization's knowledge. In an information economy, knowledge is power. Your organization already invested in developing this knowledge; now it needs to be able to find it.

ReduceMail Pro Mail Management Tools Can Help

Archiving email is a good business practice that can help your organization harness its information technology potential. Although there is some upfront cost, the rewards more than pay for themselves when good data management practices help save the company money in litigation, regulatory compliance, storage costs, and in other ways.

The ReduceMail Pro suite of products for Lotus Notes mail can help your organization achieve its mail management goals. ReduceMail Pro Archive, our signature mail archive product, is an intuitively-designed, user-friendly mail management utility that can manage mail throughout the enterprise through a controlled archive process. It helps reduce mailbox size, allows the mail to be retrieved through the All-In-The-Mailfile retrieval process, and provides hierarchical storage management capabilities. ReduceMail Pro Archive is the comprehensive mail management tool for Lotus Notes administrators who need robust functionality and good relations with the end user community while achieving the mail management goals for their enterprise.

For more information about ReduceMail Pro Archive and other ReduceMail Pro products, please contact:

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