



# Avoiding mistakes in email archiving

## A CWL Systems White Paper

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### Reasons for erroneous decisions

The problems arising from recent explosions in the volume of business communication are well documented. IT professionals are charged with maintaining system performance in increasingly volatile technical and business environments. Data storage issues, backup, DR planning, day-to-day management and virtualisation projects combined with increasingly powerful regulatory bodies to create pressure that can lead to ‘best endeavour’ decisions on email archiving being made. The issue for business is that decisions made under time and compliance pressure are rarely optimal. The costs of making the wrong decision are very real: wasted investment in inappropriate technology, increased management cost, inefficiency, and at worst: fines for non-compliance.

Information Technology has always been good at solving problems of its own making. Fortunes can be made where the problems are most acute. When email management was identified as an area of potential business vulnerability a slew of new products emerged to ‘solve’ the problem, often based on US concerns about litigation and discovery. The rapid evolution of new solutions is testament to the commercial opportunity email archiving represents. Major organisations have invested millions of R&D dollars into creating a myriad array of candidate technologies. But which one is right for your business? What are the implications of getting the answer wrong? Will the rapid evolution of the technology mean that any decision made today will be obsolete in a couple of years? In such an environment it is unsurprising that some poor decisions have been made.

IT decision makers find themselves between a 'rock and a hard place'. Taking a considered view, waiting for a leading technology to emerge leaves the organisation open to complaints of non-compliance and inefficiency as communication volume increases. Acting too quickly can lead to poor decision making, inappropriate investment and increased costs.

This paper highlights the main points that an IT professional should consider before investing in email archiving technology. We look at where responsibility for selecting an email archiving strategy should reside. Finally we provide a strategy for IT professionals to adopt that helps to improve decision making.

But first, what are the implications of doing nothing about email archiving?

## IMPLICATIONS

### 1 Ever-increasing volumes overwhelm email systems

There's no sign of any slowing in the rate of growth of email volumes. Indeed, as Blackberries and other mobile email devices become the norm, we can expect to see volumes increase still faster as our email chases us 24 hours a day, and email gets more market share of the communications we make. If email systems can't keep up several serious problems can occur:

#### **Poor performance, broken SLAs, high costs**

Email systems have an insatiable appetite for resources: expensive storage, servers and bandwidth are consumed, PSTs sprawl across the servers and workstations. Performance suffers, and finding information is hit-or-miss and time consuming. Users are unproductive, backups are huge, support people are fighting fires rather than supporting the business.

#### **Lost Productivity – How much?**

In 2006 Butler Group reported "the typical information worker now spends up to one-quarter of his or her day searching for the right information to complete a given task." This figure isn't unique. An article in Kmworld quotes studies finding that Knowledge workers spend from 15% to 35% of their time searching for information. That's 6 hours per week per employee at the lowest estimate. This was in 2004. There is circumstantial evidence to suggest it's got worse since then.

A recent paper by Contoural for Google raises another issue: the cost in lost productivity of people doing their own manual email archiving. It suggests that an hour per week is a reasonable estimate of time wasted per employee. An hour per week per employee lost just managing personal archiving, above and beyond the time wasted searching for information.

#### **Expensive errors**

So it makes companies unproductive and inefficient to have people taking a long time finding information, but what if they fail to find it? Stories abound of sales people successfully closing loss-making deals based on out-of-date price-lists and accidents caused by out-of-date instructions. The bottom line is that information mistakes can hurt the brand, cost real money, or even kill people.

## 2 Compliance

The regulation industry isn't in recession. More and more bodies offer guidance or demand compliance. People know if they fall under the jurisdiction of the FSA, have to comply with SOX, the FOIA or the Data Protection Act, but new compliance requirements arrive all the time. For example, supplying the public sector or relying on email as evidence in court both now need solid evidence of good information management.

Compliance staff in companies need flexible tools to help them manage content and enforce retention policies, which they just don't get as part of the email system. Without these tools the business is vulnerable to successful challenge and huge penalties.

### Getting the right framework

#### Email Archiving is not an IT decision

Organisations are often very good at delegating responsibility to IT. There can often be a perception that it is the IT department's duty to take lead role with anything to do with technology. Unfortunately, email archiving by its very title suggests that responsibility falls squarely on the shoulders of the company's IT management. However, nothing could be further from the truth. The way your organisation operates is wholly dependent on communications; both internal and external. Your email archiving solution supports your company's communications and as such, is an integrated element of business operations. Email archiving is therefore a business, not a departmental, decision. Before considering potential solutions IT professionals need to engage the whole business. The importance of highlighting how email archiving solution effects business operations cannot be understated. Getting the right solution will significantly improve competitiveness and efficiency. Getting the wrong solution will be costly. Encouraging a business discussion will provide the IT department with a list of user needs and priorities that need to be considered. Final sign off on any decision must rest with business executives, not technical advisers. While the IT department has a responsibility to advise and point out the implications of selecting individual solutions, email archiving is a business not a technical decision and responsibility for making it should rest with the board.

### Complex decisions in a dynamic environment

#### Selecting the right solution in a rapidly evolving field

Communication has evolved and is continuing to evolve at an ever increasing rate. For some users, mobile devices have become the de – facto standard mechanism by which business decisions are communicated throughout the organisation. Professional social networks provide advice and support informal discussion. The organisation not only has to manage a plethora of channels for commercial gain, it has to provide an efficient communications infrastructure for operations and protect itself against liabilities which may arise on any communication medium. Archiving solutions progress as communications mechanisms develop making selection difficult. It is possible that over the next few years email mail archiving will evolve into communications archiving and be delivered via the 'cloud'. Vendors like Symantec, Red Earth and Mimosa compete to provide the best possible solution to email archiving problems for different organisation sizes and sectors. Google has recently come to market with services that promise to shake up the world of email archiving. Google's Email Archiving and Message Discovery service needs no in-house archive servers –

everything is taken care of in the cloud. It will certainly extend email archiving into businesses that haven't considered it before, even if it isn't the answer to all email archiving problems.

Many vendors offer effective email archiving solutions, often with a vast array of options and extensions. Expect to see more vendors enter the arena, often driven by increasing regulation.

Another layer of complexity is provided by the business environment itself. Evolving communications methods are changing the way business interacts with suppliers, competitors and customers. The needs of business are changing as organisations take advantage of the opportunities presented by communications technology. Determining an appropriate email archiving solution requires second-guessing future business needs. While it may be possible to hit one moving target, accurately hitting two interrelated targets may be more a matter of chance than design.

## Selecting the right solution

### A strategy designed for dynamic environments

In dynamic environments, organisations have to accept that the right solution is one which will track and adapt as requirements change and technology develops. Continual management of capability requires the creation of expert teams. Business strategy and direction is rightly the responsibility and within the expertise of an organisation's management board. It may be impossible or undesirable to maintain expert tracking of communications and archiving technologies as one of an organisation's core competences. Partnering with a specialist organisation is a strategy that reduces risk in complex environments. An expert partner can bring industry best practise and years of relevant experience into your organisation.

#### **Your chosen partner should be able to demonstrate the following:**

1. Training and business relationships with a variety of email archiving solution partners.
2. A deep understanding of the data availability challenges of organisations and businesses.
3. The ability and freedom to provide unbiased advice based upon your business needs.
4. Several case studies from a variety of clients which demonstrate solutions to differing business needs.
5. The ability to consult at the highest level, to understand your particular environment, and how best to meet your challenges.
6. A track record of pro-active rather than reactive advice; your organisation needs to be made aware of regulatory issues and technical developments before they create problems.
7. Cultural fit. Your organisations will, hopefully be working together over an extended time. You need to feel comfortable.

## Summary

Any solution that supports core business functions such as internal and external communication needs to be a business rather than a technical decision. As such responsibility for selecting the technology should rest with the board rather than the IT department.

The need for some form of email archiving has long been accepted. The attractiveness of the market has attracted several organisations all intent on meeting the needs of business to protect itself against compliance, liability against litigation while improving operational effectiveness. The result is a rapid evolution of systems and a highly dynamic environment which makes the selection of the right technology for your individual business difficult.

A rapidly changing business and communications environment makes a complex decision even more difficult; the solution may be to develop a partnering strategy with a data availability expert. This provides the business with expertise, experience and ongoing management which ensures your organisation is protected as the environment and solutions evolve. Selection of a partner is critical, for expert advice, implementation and cultural fit.

***“Our users are much happier, the compliance department is much better equipped, and my team can provide a more effective email system. Everybody wins”.*** City IT support manager at Mitsui talking of her email archiving solution from CWL.

## Talk to the experts

CWL are experts in this area, with successful email archiving deployments in the City of London under their belt. In our experience many successful email archiving projects don't start with compliance – It's just as likely to be immediate operational concerns about performance, capacity, backup or loss of control of PST files. So if your email system is creaking, people are finding it hard to find things, or keeping it running is more difficult than it could be, talk to CWL about email archiving – it could solve much more than your current problems, it could solve problems you don't yet know you have.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

For further information about our email archiving solutions visit: [cwlsystems.co.uk](http://cwlsystems.co.uk) or call CWL Systems on **01480 217777** today.

