

White Paper

Why Should you
archive your email
with a hosted service?

An Osterman Research White Paper

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Executive Summary

Email is the primary communication system and file transport mechanism used in organizations of all sizes. Email systems and, increasingly, instant messaging systems generate enormous amounts of content that must be preserved for a variety of reasons, **including:**

Compliance with local, state, federal and international statutory requirements

Electronic discovery requirements and best practices

Knowledge management applications
Disaster recovery and business continuity

Messaging archiving systems are ideally suited to preserving content in support of all of these requirements. Further, a properly configured messaging archiving system can alleviate the significant burden of managing growth in email and instant messaging storage, making IT departments and end users more efficient in the process.

There are different ways to deploy messaging archiving, including on-premise hardware and software, appliances and hosted services. This white paper discusses the key issues involved in considering messaging archiving solutions, and provides an overview of the advantages of using a hosted archiving system. Throughout this white paper, you will also find commentary and discussion of Sonian Networks' Hosted Archiving Solution and the benefits that it can offer to an organization of any size.

Why Should You Archive Your Content?

Email archiving technology, while in use primarily in the financial services industry for many years, has not been widely adopted outside of that industry. However, Sonian has been finding growing interest in the use of archiving products and technology in a wide variety of industries owing to the benefits that archiving can offer to virtually any organization.

Regulatory compliance is becoming more important

Regulatory compliance has been the traditional and largest market for email and instant messaging archiving, driven primarily by regulations established by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and enforced by the National Association of Securities Dealers (NASD), now the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA). The key driver for the use of messaging archiving in this market has been the preservation of communication between broker-dealers and their customers, although hedge funds, investment advisors and others are now subject to records preservation requirements for which messaging archiving is a critical element.

E-Discovery is very important for E-mail and IM content

A more recent driver for the use of messaging archiving is electronic discovery. Because a growing proportion of most organizations' business records are stored in email, email messages are increasingly subject to discovery orders during legal proceedings. One source estimates that 75% of all discovery orders today specify email records as part of the discoverable content.

A related application for messaging archiving is litigation support. In this application, an organization can review its relevant email content early in a legal action in order to understand the viability of its position. For example, learning early after an organization has been sued that its defense would be difficult to justify can lead to an early resolution of the case and can lead to substantial savings in legal fees.

Another key driver for messaging archiving are the newly adopted amendments to the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure (FRCP). These amendments will have a major impact on the way that organizations manage electronic data. However, an Osterman Research survey conducted in December 2006 found that more than one-half of organizations at the time did not understand the new rules well enough to understand the impact that they would have on their data retention practices, while only one in five organizations did not anticipate any sort of change in their corporate behavior in response to the changes.

Further, another survey found that only seven percent of corporate counsel attorneys rated their companies as prepared for the new amendments, while more than one-half were not even aware that the new amendments were to go into effect on December 1, 2006.

Storage management is the leading messaging problem

Another important driver for the deployment of messaging archiving is the technology's inherent ability to help organizations manage messaging-related storage. Osterman Research has found in numerous surveys over the past two years that growth in messaging storage is the leading problem faced by email administrators – worse than spam outbreaks, viruses and poor user behavior of email and instant messaging systems. A properly configured archiving system can automatically migrate messaging content from servers to archival storage for e-discovery searches, message retrieval, and disaster recovery.

The result is improved messaging server performance, faster delivery times, faster recovery from backups after a server crash and a significant reduction in the amount of time that users spend managing their mailbox in order to stay under their quota limit. A related benefit of messaging archiving in the context of storage management is the ability to give end users access to their archived content so that they no longer need to ask IT to recover deleted or missing messages.

Mid-Market IT budgets are flat or shrinking

Messaging management is difficult and expensive. Not only must organizations manage the basic email infrastructure well, but they must also manage anti-spam, anti-virus and anti-spyware capabilities. They must provide messaging encryption capabilities to satisfy demands for preserving the integrity of data and to satisfy the growing variety of regulatory requirements, such as Gramm-Leach-Bliley and various state requirements. Add to this the growth of unified communications, instant messaging, Web conferencing, mobile messaging and the variety of other capabilities that users demand. While budgets in some organizations are growing to accommodate the variety of additional demands for new and better communication technologies, in many organizations budgets are either flat or shrinking. The use of a hosted archiving service like Sonian Hosted Archive can allow an organization to deploy robust messaging archiving capabilities without the up-front expense of on-premise hardware and software. Additionally, the Sonian Hosted Archive Service allows you to free up your IT resources to focus on the email infrastructure and associated components.

Benefit from enterprise-class solutions on an SMB budget

The use of a hosted archiving service that has been deployed to support large numbers of users can allow even a small organization to obtain the benefits of an enterprise-class archiving infrastructure without the prohibitive expense of deploying the hardware, software, redundant communication links, emergency backup systems, storage and all of the other elements that go into it.

Sonian is an archiving technology pioneer harnessing reliable grid utility storage and elastic virtual computing resources to provide a rock solid hosted archive service built with modern “Web 2.0” technology and design methodologies. What this means for customers is a forward-thinking archive service that has scalability, reliability and affordability baked into the core foundation. Sonian did not take any of these important concerns as an afterthought. Sonian is also the only hosted archive provider offering customers their own individual data silos. This means customer data is never co-mingled with each other.

Leveraging these advancements in technology allows Sonian to provide a higher level of security, reliability and scalability with unlimited storage at remarkably low price points that hopefully fit into the most stringent budget.

Hosted solutions can be more secure

One of the concerns that many organizational decision makers express about the use of hosted archiving solutions – or hosted messaging solutions in general – focuses on the security of their data. Many decision makers fear that rogue employees of the hosted provider may access sensitive corporate data, or that data may be intercepted en route between the customer and the data center at which their data is stored.

In reality, however, the security for most hosted archiving providers is at least as robust, if not more so, relative to in-house archiving deployments. Leading hosted archiving providers typically use redundant communication links, video surveillance of their facilities, multiple access points to customer data using two-factor authentication and other security capabilities. In most cases, on-premise deployments simply cannot match the level of security provided by most hosted providers.

Sonian Hosted Archive Service uses several layers of data protection to ensure customer information is secure. Sonian uses SSL to encrypt all data that moves “across the wire” from the customer-messaging environment to Sonian’s secure data center clusters. No customer information is accessible in clear text. Data stored in the cluster array is encrypted and authenticated with Department of Defense AES standards. Amazon Web Services, Sonian’s data center partner, meets and exceeds rigorous credit card and financial industry data security standards.

In nearly all scenarios Sonian customer data is more secure and tamper-proof than an on-premise archive solution.

Reliability can be significantly better

Access to archived data, as well as continual communication between messaging servers and the archiving system, is absolutely critical in order to preserve all content without gaps in the data store.

Osterman Research has found, for example, that organizations cite the loss of data during email outages as worse than the email outages themselves. Because many hosted archiving providers have deployed very robust capabilities, and because of growing competition in the hosted archiving market, customers can realize very high reliability when using a hosted archiving solution. Sonian’s data center partner, Amazon Web Services, has invested over \$2 Billion dollars in state of the art data centers that provide 4 layers of redundancy.

This world-class expertise and design, when applied to archiving, is available to all Sonian customers. Customer information is securely stored in two Data Center Clusters (DCC) located on the US east and West coasts. Each data center cluster consists of four physically separate data centers connected by fiber, but on different power grids, Internet access points and flood plains. In addition a European secure storage vault is used for an additional location.

Key Issues to Consider in Selecting a Vendor

There are a variety of issues to consider and questions to ask when selecting a vendor of hosted message archiving services.

What are the long-term storage requirements for archived messaging data? For example, consider that just 100 users generating 10,000 archived messages per year will store one million messages annually. If we assume that the average message size is 250kb, including attachments stored in messages, and that data must be stored for seven years, the total storage requirement will be 1.75 terabytes at any given time.

Sonian eliminates this concern by providing customers unlimited storage inclusive in it's per mailbox pricing model.

What level of scalability will be required? Many organizations have seriously underestimated their scalability requirements for archiving and so have had to replace existing systems. It is important to understand the total amount of archival storage that will be required over the long term, and how many CPU's will be needed to capture, index, store and search the data.

Sonian eliminates this concern by providing customers with unlimited storage and unlimited processing scalability to growth.

While the price of storage is dropping, the price of deploying and managing is not. Organizations that want to manage archiving systems in-house must consider the total cost of managing their storage requirements over long term, including the cost of redundant systems, remote storage for disaster recovery and business continuity and other capabilities.

Sonian eliminates this concern by encrypting and storing eight copies of customers' data in eight physically separate data centers.

How reliable must the underlying infrastructure be? For messaging archiving, the infrastructure must be extraordinarily reliable, providing at least 99.9% uptime and, preferably, 99.99% reliability or greater. Less reliability will result in loss of data and potential problems for e-discovery or regulatory compliance.

Sonian provides a documented Service Level Agreement of 99.99% uptime.

What are the opportunity costs associated with managing an internally deployed archiving infrastructure? For those organizations, that do not have the staffing bandwidth to add archiving to the already full list of tasks that most IT departments must satisfy, a hosted solution might be the most viable option.

Sonian allows you to free up your staff to focus on more mission critical applications and operations.

Summary

Messaging archiving is becoming increasingly important for a variety of applications, including helping organizations to be compliant with the growing variety of regulations focused on data preservation, electronic discovery, litigation support, storage management and knowledge management. Because of the many benefits that messaging archiving provides for different parts of an organization, archiving messaging system content is rapidly becoming a corporate best practice.

However, many organizations do not want to take on the burden of deploying and managing an internal archiving capability, while others simply do not have the budget to deploy an archiving system. For these organizations, Sonian Hosted Archiving Service can offer a number of advantages relative to in-house systems, including lower initial cost of deployment, lower ongoing cost of management and extremely high reliability.

About Sonian

Sonian, Inc. has developed a next generation hosted archive service utilizing a global cloud-based compute and storage infrastructures to achieve extraordinary performance and cost savings. Sonian is designed to provide organizations of all sizes regardless of messaging infrastructure with an archive service that uniquely meets their regulatory, best practice or storage management demands.

Sonian's pricing is based per mailbox per month and includes unlimited storage. Pricing starts at \$3/mailbox/month. Please contact sales@soniannetworks.com or (800) 275-8794 for further information, to register for an evaluation or to receive a customized proposal.

