

Exchange Server – Email Archiving Capabilities Compared

With Microsoft Exchange Server, administrators can choose between two scenarios ensuring email archiving that helps companies meet a growing number of regulations on email compliance, eDiscovery, and other legislation. The first scenario is to create an additional “Personal Archive” mailbox or an “In-Place Archive” for each user mailbox, in which emails can be transferred either automatically or manually. Alternatively, an external archiving solution such as MailStore Server can be used.

This document is meant to assist IT professionals in choosing the archiving scenario which is best suited for their company.

Scenario 1: User Mailbox “Personal Archive” or “In-Place Archive”

For each user mailbox, Microsoft Exchange Server provides the opportunity to create an additional mailbox “Personal Archive” or “In-Place Archive” into which emails can be moved either manually or automatically.¹ An appropriate configuration of Exchange Server guarantees that, within the corresponding retention periods, emails cannot be deleted from Exchange Server. Provided that all configuration parameters are set correctly, companies are able to accomplish email archiving that helps them to meet a growing number of regulations on email compliance, eDiscovery, and other legislation. Applying this scenario results in several requirements for the IT infrastructure, including the following:

Storage Capacity

Depending on the retention policies configured, emails typically remain in the archive for up to ten years. In consequence, the storage capacity needed can increase dramatically and must be made available accordingly. In addition, IT administrators have to take into consideration that Exchange does

¹ Exchange Server 2010: <https://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/dd979795.aspx>
Exchange Server 2013: [https://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/dd979800\(v=exchg.150\).aspx](https://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/dd979800(v=exchg.150).aspx)
Exchange Server 2016: <https://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/dd979800.aspx>

not longer offer single instance storage (SIS), i.e. identical emails and file attachments are stored multiple times. In comparison with previous Exchange versions, this makes the memory capacity requirements about 20 to 50 percent higher.² **Example: 70 users x 2.5 GB/year x 10 years = 1.75 Terabyte Exchange DB**

Backup

By using Personal or In-Place Archives with their corresponding retention policies, the size of the Exchange store can reach a multiple of its earlier size within just a short time. Therefore, companies should be sure to use a backup strategy which is able to handle this increase in volume. Key factors in this context are the storage capacities as well as the time window available for backup.

File Recovery

Because the amount of data to be restored increases significantly in direct relation to the factors mentioned above, a considerably higher overhead (e.g. expenditure of time) must be allocated to the recovery. The resulting downtimes must be reduced according to company size, data volume and acceptable downtime by implementing a suitable policy for redundant data storage.

Redundancy

Downtimes acceptable to a company during backup and recovery can quickly be exceeded by the increasing amounts of data. Microsoft recommends using Database Availability Groups (DAG),³ which require Windows Failover Cluster technology.

Licenses

For every Exchange user whose emails are to be archived, an Exchange Enterprise CAL has to be purchased in addition to the Standard CAL. According to Microsoft, volume licenses for Office 2010 Professional Plus or higher are required as well.⁴

Administration

Because the configurations of the Personal or In-Place Archives and especially the policies have far-reaching and sometimes irreversible consequences, IT administrators are urged to seek a preliminary consultation or training before implementation.

² <https://practical365.com/exchange-server/what-is-the-real-effect-of-removing-single-instance-storage-in-exchange-server-2010/>

³ Exchange Server 2010: [https://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/dd638137\(v=exchg.141\).aspx](https://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/dd638137(v=exchg.141).aspx)

Exchange Server 2013: <https://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/dd638137.aspx>

Exchange Server 2016: <https://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/mt697594.aspx>

⁴ <https://products.office.com/en-us/exchange/microsoft-exchange-server-licensing-licensing-overview>

Conclusion

While this scenario offers the best possible integration of the archiving functionality into Microsoft Exchange Server and Outlook, high demands are made on the IT infrastructure. Companies must carefully consider if they can meet these additional requirements and if they are willing to deal with the corresponding overhead. Typically, this is more applicable to larger corporations with the appropriate base contracts and budgets.

Scenario 2: Using an External Archiving Solution

Exchange Server includes a seamless interface for external email archiving solutions. Several solutions are on the market, including hardware, software and SaaS products. The statements made in the following scenario are based on the assumption that the software MailStore Server is used for email archiving of Exchange Server 2010, 2013 or 2016 to help companies to meet a growing number of regulations on email compliance, eDiscovery, and other legislation.

A typical configuration of the archiving process guarantees that emails are copied to the external archive immediately upon sending and receiving ensuring that archiving is complete and tamper-proof. In addition, already archived emails are deleted from the user mailboxes after a certain amount of time, resulting in a reduced workload of Exchange Server. With a special add-in, Microsoft Outlook users are still able to access the archived emails through Outlook. Applying this scenario results in the following requirements for the company's IT infrastructure:

Storage Capacity

The storage capacity assigned to Exchange Server can be held on a permanently low level because old emails are not stored in the Exchange store but in an external archive. Deduplication significantly reduces the effective storage requirements of the archive because identical emails and file attachments are stored only once.

Backup

Because the size of the Exchange store remains on a permanently low level, no additional requirements apply to the backup of Exchange Server. The architecture of the archive is optimized for incremental backup using any backup software.

Data Restore

As mentioned above, the size of the Exchange store remains on a permanently low level. This means no increased overhead (e.g. expenditure of time) is required when restoring the data. The negative impact

caused by the given downtime can be reduced due to the redundant data storage in the form of the external archive.

Redundancy

During an outage of Exchange Server, all emails remain available to the users through the archive. This reduces the negative effects of the given downtimes.

Licenses

For Exchange Server, no additional licensing is needed to use an external archiving solution. However, MailStore Server user licenses have to be purchased (starting at 5 user licenses).

Administration

The installation and administration of MailStore Server can be performed autonomously even by small businesses. Because MailStore Server does not make any changes to Exchange Server at any time, no particular risks have to be considered.

Conclusion

Although this way of archiving requires an additional software solution, the demands on the IT infrastructure are reduced significantly. Especially for small and medium-sized businesses with limited resources, this can be an important decision criterion.

About MailStore Server

Businesses can benefit from all advantages of modern, secure email archiving with MailStore Server. The software creates 1:1 copies of all emails in a central email archive to ensure the security and availability of large amounts of data over a period of years. Users can still access their email using, for example, Microsoft Outlook, or Web Access, and search through them at breathtaking speed.

Now available in version 10, MailStore Server has grown to become a global standard for email archiving in business following years of successful operation at more than 35,000 companies. Easy to install and 100-percent reliable in every situation.

