

The Benefits of User Directed Email Archiving

Report prepared under contract with EMC Corporation

Business Challenges

For a growing number of organizations, email archiving solutions have become an ideal and recommended way to retain and ensure access to corporate records that are created, transmitted and stored in email systems. These email archiving solutions enhance a company's ability to comply with regulatory and internal standards for data retention and the ability to find data when needed, either for internal use or for legal discovery. However, individual users find some centrally-managed email archiving solutions too rigid to adapt to individual or departmental needs. Some users prefer the flexibility they previously enjoyed with storing email in local PST or NSF files. An email archiving solution that can provide the right balance of user flexibility and familiar experience with centrally-managed email archiving functions can be a great advantage to an organization.

Once an organization has decided to archive and manage email, deciding on the best way to organize and categorize the data can be challenging. In some cases, the users know the email content best and its context and can help proactively organize the email content intelligently, which can help with searches, compliance and privacy. For example, some email is specific to a particular project or set of projects and those working on that project may know the proper context of the email better than an automated archiving tool might. Users may know that some email includes content that would be considered a business record and it should be filed into a business record folder. To aid with legal discovery, some users may help the legal department file certain email into an extended legal hold area because of their knowledge of the content. In addition users may help comply with company policy regarding various retention periods for email depending on the nature of its content. Some organizations may want all these benefits without keeping local PST or NSF files.

User Directed Archiving

EMC has provided this kind of advantage in its EmailXtender email archiving solution with its User Directed Archiving feature set. User Directed Archiving combines the flexibility of local user organization of local mail files and folders with the standard policy-based archiving functions provided by a central email archiving solution.

The email administrator can create a general user archive folder with specific policy and transparently deploy this top-level folder to the user's inbox. The users can then create their own folder structures under the general user archive folder and can drag-and-drop messages into these folders. Items placed anywhere in the structure of the user archive folder receive the benefits of deduplication. The same searches that can be conducted within the general archive for legal discovery or audit reasons can be conducted against the user directed archive folders.

The user archive folder can be created as a "personal" folder so that users can see only the items they place in it. Other user archive folders can be created as "shared" folders so that users can search on and view archived contents of the folder regardless of who archived the messages.

Messages in these User Directed Archiving folders get the same benefits of the central email archive such as de-duplication, compression and full text index. In addition, full searches across the entire mail store can be conducted by investigators or other appropriate staff that include the central email archive as well as any user archive folders.

Depending on compliance or privacy needs, these folders have a variety of purposes:

- ◆ Storing project-specific emails that the user knows are associated with a particular project and should be collected in a central project archive folder.
- ◆ Identifying important messages that would be considered business records that the user wants to retain for an extended period of time.
- ◆ Collecting and preserving content for legal holds.
- ◆ Providing an alternative to personal archives stored locally in the form PST or NSF files.

If the email archive administrator so chooses, users could have the ability to delete messages from the User Directed Archiving folders if they are no longer useful or necessary. A separate administrative function allows the administrator to determine if messages that users delete will be retained or removed from the archive after all references to them have been deleted.

The user view of these folders is consistent with their normal email experience, as shown in the Outlook and Notes screen shots below, and includes examples of a way that users might organize the user archive folders.

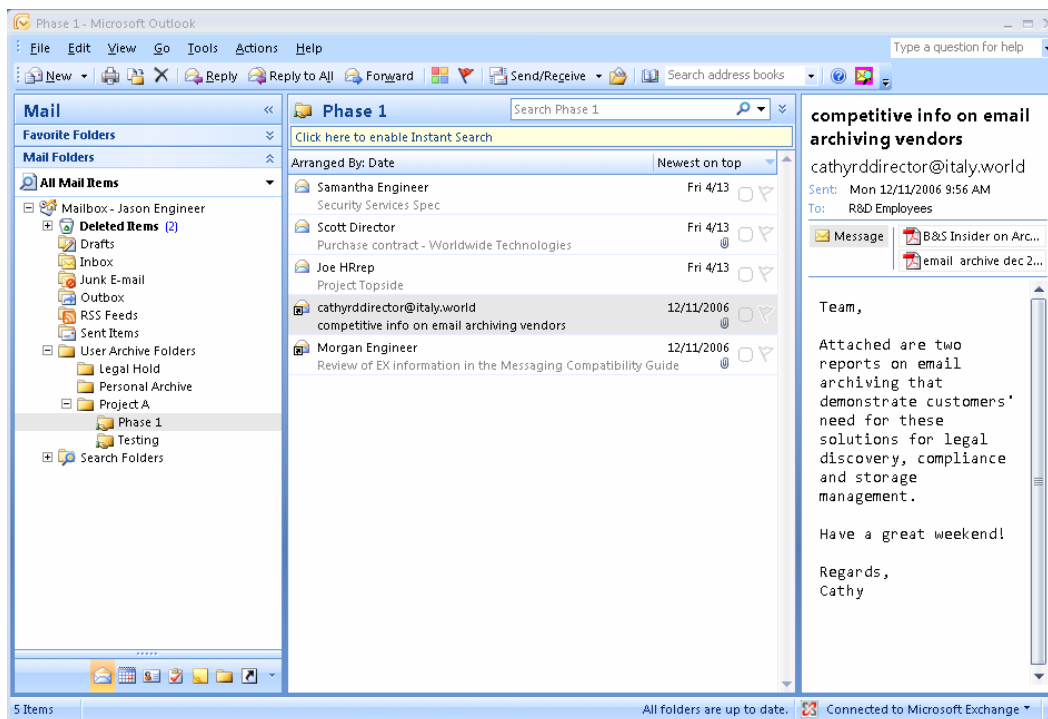


Figure 1 – Microsoft Outlook screen shot

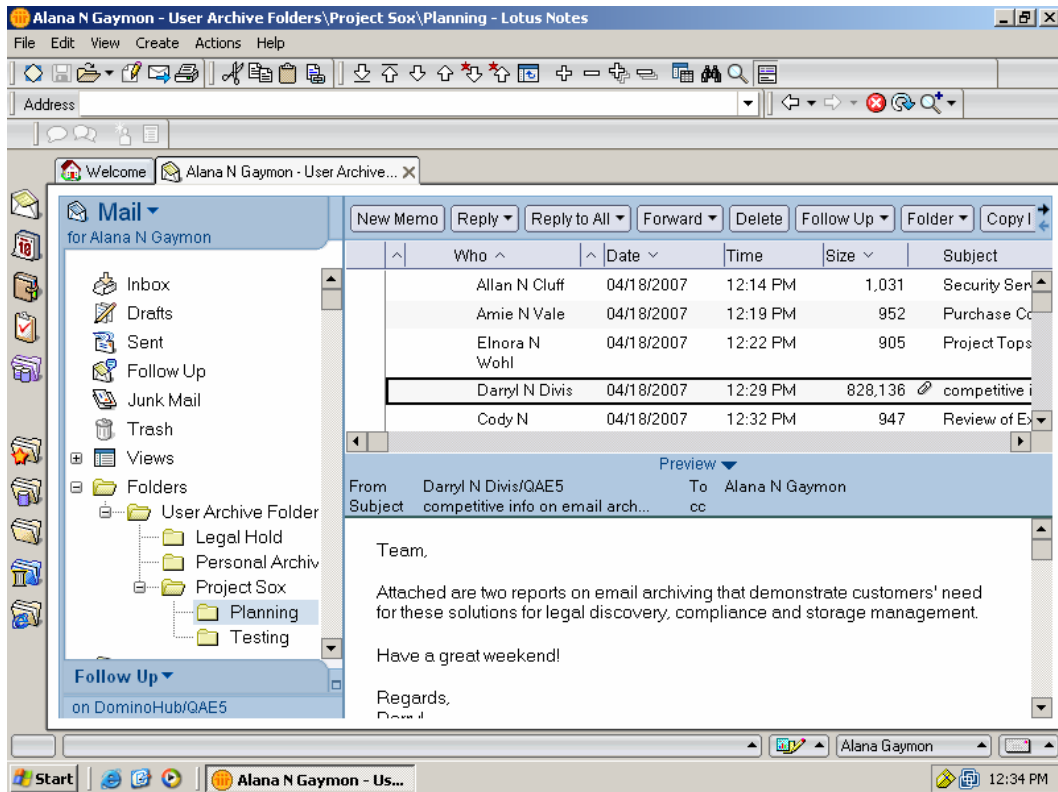


Figure 2 – Lotus Notes screen shot

Summary and Conclusion

Frequently organizations find that locally stored and unmanaged PST or NSF files are incompatible with good governance, compliance and security. There is resistance from the user community to eliminate PST and NSF files because of the perceived loss of flexibility or loss of control over the organization of their folders. Given users an alternative to personal archives in a centrally managed, de-duplicated email archiving system makes EMC EmailXtender User Directed Archiving a powerful combination that allows:

- ◆ Users to retain emails for an extended period of time in their inbox without having to concern themselves with backup or central management functions of those folders.
- ◆ Compliance officials can enforce corporate retention policies with pre-defined retention periods associated at the folder level.
- ◆ Email administrators can build their management procedures around the central archive for retention, backup, security, and capacity planning knowing that they are managing all the enterprise email content.
- ◆ Investigators and administrators can improve accuracy of discovery searches and hold all responsive emails within a dedicated folder in the tamper-proof archive.

The value of having enterprise-wide email content centrally archived and easily searchable cannot be underestimated. Similarly, providing a means for users to organize data using familiar methods without substantial re-training is also invaluable. User Directing Archiving can meet the needs of a diverse user community, balancing flexibility, effectiveness and central control.

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