

Employee requests for deleted email retrieval negatively impact IT staff productivity

People have become so accustomed to using email – just like picking up a phone – that they often forget how important, even critical for businesses, the content in those emails is. Email data is much more than a simple communications tool for most organizations. Email is an ‘official’ record of company business and this means that nearly every email sent and received on a daily basis is a ‘journal’ entry that may be needed or required by someone – be it the sender, recipient or a court order.

In many organizations, email is not only business-critical, but it is one huge repository of unstructured data that contains key knowledge, workflow information and customer contact data. All this data can offer significant value to an organization even after it is placed into an archive or most likely left in a PST file on a user’s machine.

How do organizations manage their email? Do they value what’s in their email? Do they take a structured approach or do they depend on users to save their emails? Can old or deleted emails be retrieved easily? Are they maximising and ‘re-using’ the content in their email archives?

GFI Software™, a leading provider of security solutions to the SMB (small and medium businesses) market, recently surveyed 200 SMBs in the US and UK and found that more than two-thirds (69% and 66% respectively) are failing to maximize the efficiency with which they extract useful business intelligence from archived email. While a majority of businesses value this information – including for analysis of communication trends and response times to customer queries, storage capacity monitoring and data leakage protection – many are using only the most basic tools to archive their email.

The survey was commissioned to understand the **email archiving** practices of SMBs. The research shows how organizations retain and reuse email data, what solutions they have in place for doing this, what value they place on email data and how frequently the IT department is called upon to assist in the recovery of email from archives to support employees.

“69% (UK: 66%) of respondents indicate that employee requests for assistance retrieving deleted emails limits the productivity of their IT staff.”

“45% (UK: 42%) of those surveyed have no IT solution for managing and automating email archive retention and retrieval.”

In summary, GFI's research revealed that:

- » 69% (UK: 66%) of respondents indicate that employee requests for assistance retrieving deleted emails limits the productivity of their IT staff
- » On average, respondents say they receive more than 15 (UK: 16) requests per week from users who need access to old or archived email, while one in four – 26% (UK: 15%) – of those surveyed have to field 18 requests or more per week
- » 45% (UK: 42%) of those surveyed have no IT solution for managing and automating email archive retention and retrieval
- » 19% (UK: 22%) say the information contained within their archived email is “priceless” to the organization, while three quarters (75% – UK: 62%) value their organization's archived email data at more than \$100,000
- » 24% (UK: 15%) of respondents do not believe they are storing their email in the most cost-effective way, and 25% (UK: 29%) do not know if their current process is cost-effective.

Helping SMBs make smarter decisions

Email is increasingly being used as a business intelligence tool, with the survey revealing that 75% (UK: 70%) of those questioned use email for communication trend analysis, while three quarters (76% – UK: 66%) use historical email to plot response times to customer queries, particularly in sales-driven environments.

Organizations cannot afford to allow email to gather virtual dust once archived, and neither can they allow the retrieval of historical email to impact IT efficiency. This research shows how email retention forms part of the overall business intelligence strategy and how, with the right tools, an existing asset like email data can deliver long-term value to organizations of all sizes.

Many SMBs lack adequate Email Archiving

More than one third – (37% – UK: 30%) of those surveyed still employ manual processes for the retention of email, with server-side storage of Microsoft® Outlook PST archive files, while 29% (UK: 26%) retain archives on individual users machines.

The use of web-based hosted email services in the workplace, such as Gmail, has had a significant impact on the way users retain email, with 30% (UK: 23%) of those surveyed using it for the storage of some or all archived email – a practice most prevalent among smaller organizations of 10-49 employees, where more than half (51%) in the US utilize it, compared to 30% in the UK.

There are still too many businesses that underestimate the importance of email as a source of corporate information and business-critical data. What is also worrying is that many organizations rely too heavily on local archives and not a central repository; and of greater concern is that between 23% and 30% of SMBs are using web-based hosted email services to store their archives. Do these organizations understand the risks?

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Are your emails stored in a secure manner? Do you use a central archive allowing you easy and fast access to old or deleted emails? Are you maximizing the value of the content in your corporate email and turning it into a source of business intelligence? No? Then you should seriously consider email archiving as a solution to give structure to your email data – and glean information that could be of enormous benefit to the smooth running of your organization.

Check out GFI MailArchiver™ 2011 today and make the most of your priceless emails!

The surveys of 200 U.S.- and U.K.-based IT decision makers at organizations with between five and 249 employees were fielded by noted polling expert Opinion Matters, between November 1- 7, 2011.



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