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Athena Archiver™

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The Hidden Costs Of Email Archiving



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In a marketplace of piecemeal solutions, many vendors are happy to sell a small piece of the compliance solution, leaving the difficult task of integration to your IT department. However, these integration costs can double your bottom line, resulting in out-of-control expenditures. It is easy to overlook the additional costs associated with archiving software. Hidden costs are a part of life, but being educated about them allows you to make an informed decision based on the total system cost and not just what's on an invoice.

Here are some of the things to look for when purchasing an email archiving system:

The Cost of Deployment

How much time does it take to install, test, and deploy a production archiving system?

A typical email archiving solution can touch dozens of components within your IT infrastructure. Email services are the nerve center of the corporate network.

A well-designed email archiving solution enables customers to be online and using an outsourced system within hours and using an on-site system within days. There should be no costly setup charges or "installation / integration / consulting" fees. A quality archiving system is simple to install and test, with clear, concise instructions describing how to configure it, and provides an intuitive, unified

Athena Archiver Email Archiving Solution:

- No Hidden Costs
- Transparent Design
- Geographic and Administrative Scalability
- Intuitive GUI
- Encrypted Search Client Available from Anywhere
- Reduced IT Intervention

interface through which the system is easily managed. Some archiving systems work directly on the mail server, slowing down performance significantly and requiring more hardware at an additional cost, but the best systems work in parallel with your existing mail servers, integrating easily and offloading some of those servers' tasks. Backups should work with your existing backup software and storage systems to provide real-time, encrypted archive backups.

Vendors who provide an integrated appliance solution often offer a lower cost of deployment by reducing the complexity and number of components involved. Appliances eliminate the need to purchase hardware, configure an operating environment, and troubleshoot integration issues. The difference in deployment costs between a software-only product and an appliance can be \$25,000 or more when factoring in the additional cost of the IT personnel needed to configure equipment, learn and perform the installation and deployment procedures, and test the system.

The Cost of Support

How much time and how many resources does it take to support the system on a daily basis?

Support is an intangible that most people don't quantify until after the system is bought and deployed. The biggest factors affecting support costs are related to how reliable and robust the system is. Very few things are as mission critical as email messaging and archiving systems, and the quality of vendors' solutions differ greatly. Here are some signs of a quality system: the system should be

flexible and able to work under many different operating conditions, showing robustness; the vendor's website should be well thought out and clearly written, showing the vendor's commitment to quality; the graphical interface should be intuitive, showing good, easy-to-use design that won't require expensive training; and the installation should be easy, showing a system capable of reducing your IT complexity. All of these qualities will lower your

support costs.

On the other hand, if installation is expensive and complicated, it is a sign that the system is not mature and could have numerous support problems. While some complexity can be expected, a well-designed system should hide much of that complexity, making it easy to use and maintain. Imagine... if it's hard to install, how much will

it cost to support?

The Cost of Data Lock-in

Is your original data able to be extracted easily? How extendable is the system?

Compliance needs are only going to grow over time, and it is critical for your archiving solution to be extendable and viable for the long-term. Having the ability and tools to extract your archived data to their original format is imperative. This flexibility is important should the time come to choose a different system for your compliance needs. Software should use open standards such as AES, 3DES, and X.509 for encryption, and be able to export to leading and industry standard formats. When a vendor does not provide a sufficient export system, your data are held "hostage," and migrating your valuable archives

"Ideally, you should be able to "set it and forget it", however it is not uncommon for one or two people spend 25-50% of their time managing the email archiving solution. That can add up to \$40,000-\$100,000/year in support costs."

may be impossible.

The Cost of Security

How much emphasis has been placed on operating system and application security?

This is a system which will contain all of your company's email and a large amount of corporate intellectual property. The operating system underlying the archiving solution needs to be one trusted for its security. Passwords need to be highly protected. Private data need to be encrypted. The cost of a violation of the system's integrity could be tremendous, and such a violation could result in a compromise of the entire corporate email archive and your confidential data. It can also lead to questionable data and non-compliance, possibly resulting in large fines.

The Cost of Licensing

People forget to factor in costs for additional software licenses, such as those for Microsoft Exchange, Microsoft Windows, database management systems, and WORM storage. Archiving software which does not require third-party-licensed software can significantly lower bottom line costs. Microsoft licensing alone can run as high as \$10,000 plus yearly maintenance fees.

An email archiving vendor should be able to demonstrate a fully functional system with their software and be able to tell you exactly how much it will cost to comply with regulations. Be wary of using a vendor which points you to another software product to "finish the job." Chances are, you'll be the target of vendor finger-pointing when something goes wrong.