

## Preventing the Surprise Attack of the Email Monster





When you think of a monster, you likely dredge up some sort of creature that wreaks havoc at will, always lurking behind the scenes waiting for the most inopportune time to appear, and then emerging and causing untold damage to everything in its path as it rages out of control. The worst kind of monster is the one that continues to grow unchecked.

Ironically this same description fits company email when it is unceremoniously archived en masse. It sits quietly, squirreled away in massive files, expanding at incredible rates, stockpiled as seemingly harmless dialog. As the email archive balloons, it consumes ever more resources and then, without warning, surfaces surprising conversations that create potentially harmful scenarios for the company when it faces litigation. Fortunately, there is a way to effectively control and manage this monster to reduce risk, avoid runaway archiving costs, and improve litigation preparedness.

Only two years ago, email management was thought of as an interesting idea but it seemed easier to stick with the prevailing philosophy of storing everything forever. Storage was believed to be cheap, search was easy, and most tools to manage email were considered cumbersome.

What executives didn't foresee when making this decision was that the exponential growth in content, combined with the increase in litigation activity, would end up making the "store everything" decision an unsustainable approach of monstrous proportions.

### **Doing the Math**

According to the Radicati Group's Corporate IT and Business User Survey, 2012-2013, business users send 36 email messages per day, and receive approximately 78 email messages per day.

When you consider that an employee handles approximately 100 emails a day, the volume of email for a 5000-person organization over a work week of five business days would be 2.5 million emails. Over a year, that would be 130 million emails.

The volume of business information being retained has recently come into focus as organizations see their Information Technology budgets rapidly being consumed by the ever-growing cost to store the burgeoning volumes of information. According to



Information Week<sup>1</sup>, as much as 17% of IT budgets today are earmarked for storage costs and the number continues to take over larger portions of the budget annually.

Not only is archiving all your email expensive in terms of gobbling up today's available dollars, it is also eating away at the organization's ability to evolve because strategic initiative funding must be sacrificed to the burden of storage costs.

### **Frightening Thoughts for Corporate Counsel**

When the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure were modified in 2006 to address the issue of electronically stored information (ESI), the handling of electronic evidence changed, which in turn changed the way that cases are argued and evidence is collected and preserved. It became clear to the business world that e-discovery was challenging, costly, and extremely difficult to manage. Although the need exists to be "e-discovery ready," that is, having proper governance and defensible preservation and disposition of ESI (including email), achieving success in this area still seems elusive for most organizations.

Besides the risk of over retaining information by archiving everything, it is simply too expensive during the e-discovery process to sort through all the electronic water cooler chat that happens on a daily basis to find evidence germane to pending litigation. Any company that has ever had to write a check to cover e-discovery costs knows they need to find a better solution than wholesale archiving of email content.

They also know that, without changing their email management strategy, each e-discovery process becomes ever more costly with more email to search through and more email that matches preservation criteria.

Enforcing email management policies has also been further complicated by the growth in the disconnected user base resulting from expanded access capabilities. Employees might be accessing the mail system from a Smartphone, tablet, or other existing or future device or access point, yet organizations still need to enable email management policies regardless of how their employees are interacting with the system.

<sup>1</sup> Information Week Survey, December 2009



## Attempts at Dealing with the Email Monster

To date, business policy regarding the retention management of email was not established based upon what was proper and best for the business, but instead based upon the limited tools available to enforce policy. This unfortunate reality has fostered ineffective email management policies of the past decade including the following:

- Keeping it all—This technique is the most common archiving mistake from the last decade, which has caused the over-retention challenges we see in this decade.
- Placing mailbox size quotas on the whole mailbox—This policy ignores the value of individual emails. When the users hit the limit and find themselves in “email jail,” users sort by size and delete the largest emails. This approach retains the clutter of smaller emails and likely causes important emails to be lost.
- Personal over-archiving—Many firms addressed the system storage problem by allowing users to save email in files on their local hard drive. This technique results in user over-retention and exposes firms to massive e-discovery headaches and costs.
- Deleting all email at a set number of days—This approach obviously fails because records do exist in email, and the company is wholesale disposing of them. It is also highly disruptive to users, so they’ll pursue workarounds, which cause even greater issues for information governance.

The previous approaches fail because it is not the age, size, sender, or recipient that determines the value of individual messages. The value of email messages, just as with paper, is determined by what the message says. Most messages are transient and of fleeting value. A few emails document the business of the organization, and others are helpful to the users in performing their job duties. Thus, classification of email based upon content value is imperative. Two divergent camps have emerged:

- Auto classification—While attractive for obvious reasons, this option has proven unsuccessful due to the costs and level of effort required to train the auto classification software, and because of the highly unstructured, colloquial, and brief nature of email.



- Manual classification—While users know their email the best, many attempts have suffered because the approaches and tools that were provided to enable the user to do manual classification were cumbersome.

The best approach has proven to be an elegant blend of auto and manual classification. Automation and ease-of-use are critical, and the time expiration and size quota features must be leveraged intelligently. These factors, combined with executive support and good communications, enable firms to achieve the goal of proper email retention and governance, including defensible disposition of the majority of email as transient content.

### **Landing on the Critical Fix List**

The original drivers of email management were systems efficiency and regulations in the securities industry, which led to archiving. Archiving all email has simply proven untenable. The new drivers can be summarized as follows:

- Reduce risk posed by email that was unnecessarily retained
- Reduce e-discovery costs of searching and reviewing oceans of clutter
- Reduce runaway storage costs

Any one or a combination of these factors has caused email management to rise to the top of many organizations' critical fix list.

### **Managing the Email Monster with Value-Based Archiving**

Most organizations are moving envelopes through their email system, but they don't know what is in them. With Integro Email Manager™ (IEM), organizations gain visibility into what is inside the envelope so that informed decisions can be made, based on actual content versus basic email identifiers, allowing them to avoid an embarrassing and perhaps costly surprise email surfacing in the future.



Extending the power of the IBM Enterprise Content Management suite of products, IEM offers value-based archiving that applies auto classification with human oversight, customized to meet your specific business needs. It enables your organization to

- Properly retain and govern what's important.
- Dispose of what you don't need as early as possible.
- Avoid disrupting the productivity of the user.

When email is received, IEM automatically evaluates the content of all messages and calculates its value. Typically, this evaluation identifies only a few messages that qualify as relevant business communications—a business record. These few messages, which exceed the set probability thresholds, are then declared and classified automatically as records. If the IEM confidence rating on a message indicates a probable record, a suggestion is offered to the user with the application's confidence rating and the recommended records category.

What is important is that the employee remains in control and can change the classification based on their personal knowledge of the email. This type of consideration is necessary only on a few of the messages received each day and takes only a moment. Users can also quickly tag messages as records when email is sent, or use their own folders to automatically tag messages as records. The same tagging method also enables users to keep messages longer in a centrally managed, personal storage. The majority of messages are automatically disposed per a transient, short retention policy.

The Integro solution includes SmartAssist®, which uses contextual classification to provide suggestions. SmartAssist is initially trained with example emails, but then continues to learn on the fly at the user level as it receives feedback based on user work patterns. SmartAssist is unique to IEM and enables companies to gain the support of its workforce to achieve the goals of true value-based retention.

IEM eases cultural adoption because you can start with generous retention periods and refine policy overtime in a stepped fashion. Employees are able to remain in control of their individual work habits as they create and name their own folders that they plan to use. With the click of a button, these custom folders map to the corporate file plan.



In addition to self-managed folders, users can tag the few important messages where they are, anywhere in the mailbox, to be retained longer for personal use or as company records. Most importantly, emails can be tagged as the message is sent, and all internal recipients easily see the records designation.

IEM works with both Microsoft Exchange, including Microsoft Office 365, and IBM Lotus Domino email systems.

While this solution can assist companies across industries, it is an ideal fit for any company that has any one or combination of the following attributes:

- Large base of email users; typically starting at around 2000 employees
- Regulated industries
- Litigation risk or activity

**To learn more about how you can prevent the surprise attack of the email monster while reducing cost and risk associated with email management, contact:**

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## About Integro

From email management and e-discovery to records and enterprise content, delighted customers worldwide have trusted Integro's proactive approach since 1995. Integro's award-winning products and services help companies directly impact the bottom line and deliver tremendous benefits for Legal, IT, and Records. Especially notable is Integro Email Manager (IEM), the only proactive email content management solution for IBM Lotus Notes, Microsoft Exchange, and Microsoft Office 365, enabling organizations to keep what's important and eliminate what's not.

An IBM Premier Business Partner, Integro is also a leading expert in the IBM portfolio of ECM and Information Lifecycle Governance solutions, providing consulting, migrations, implementation, and managed services.



For more information, visit:

[www.integro.com](http://www.integro.com)

## About IBM Enterprise Content Management

Enterprise Content Management solutions from IBM help companies realize the value of content for better insight and outcomes. IBM ECM can help companies transform the way they do business by enabling them to put content in motion—capturing, activating, socializing, analyzing and governing it throughout the entire lifecycle. IBM can help organizations identify critical content within large data volumes, and prioritize it to gain insight to inform business decisions. We help businesses put the right content in the hands of the right people, at the right time, while effectively managing the cost and risk of enterprise content from capture to disposal. IBM has provided ECM solutions to more than 13,000 companies, organizations and governments around the world, helping them remain competitive through new intelligent innovation.

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