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READY NET GO ... NEWS

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Tip of the Month

Tracking Lost or Stolen Computers

According to the Gartner Group (2002), 1 in 10 laptops is stolen and nearly 80% of those reported are inside jobs.

PCs, although less likely to be stolen because of their size and weight, are also stolen on a regular basis. So what can you do to protect your business and personal possessions?

Install tracking software on your laptop, PC, and even PDAs.

This tracking software is similar to the tracking software installed in vehicles (i.e., LoJack) that allows authorities to remotely trace the location of and recover the vehicle.

For laptops, PCs and PDAs, a program is installed on the computer that will "phone home" at certain intervals or can be "called" to detect unauthorized use. If the computer is connected to the Internet, the physical location can be found via the IP address. Some tracking software will still function even if the operating system is reformatted and the hard drive is removed. A valuable feature is the ability to remotely erase files on the hard drive so sensitive data cannot be seen or copied.

Other Uses

Another benefit of tracking software is the ability of IT managers to remotely track programs that are downloaded on laptops and PCs. If you have a large staff and many mobile devices, keeping track of all of the software installed on these machines can be difficult. Remote management of laptops can save valuable time and expense and keep computers running efficiently.

Archiving Emails in Outlook and Exchange

Email has become the standard mode of communication in most offices - it's not uncommon for a single worker to get a hundred or more emails per day between work-related, personal and SPAM messages. Calculate this amount per worker per day over the course of a year and you can see how some IT managers are ready to pull their hair out. External regulations, in addition to this internal storage requirement, also have created a need for many IT folks to assess how data is stored and how long it is kept.

Why should you archive emails?

- 1) **Internal storage requirements and performance.** If you use an Exchange Server to store your email, you may be noticing a drop in performance if it has been in service for many years and you have many users. Exchange 2003 on Small Business Server with service pack 2 installed has a 75GB limit on available storage space (prior versions had a limit of 16GB). As the server reaches capacity, performance issues arise. By storing older email outside of Exchange, the Exchange Server will be able to operate at peak performance.
- 2) **Legal matters.** Company lawsuits and corporate scandals are on the rise. Employee theft and libel are becoming commonplace and companies need non-editable proof of reprehensible actions. Archived emails can provide this legal proof for internal investigations.

WWW (Websites Worth Watching)

1. www.theatrealliance.org – Want to go to the theatre in Philly but don't know what's playing? Check out this site for events citywide.
2. www.ardentheater.org – Arden Theatre Company
3. www.phillytheatreco.com – Philadelphia Theatre Company
4. www.wilmatheater.org – The Wilma Theater

- 3) **External regulations from governmental sources.** The Securities and Exchange Commission, through the Sarbanes-Oxley Act (2002), has regulated that company records, including inbound and outbound emails, need to be archived for a minimum of 7 years. HIPAA, the DOD and the FDA also have established policies for records management. For a detailed summary of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act visit: <http://www.sox-online.com/index.html>. Nonprofits are also affected by this legislation. They can find relevant information at: http://www.guidestar.org/news/features/sarbanes_oxley.jsp
- 4) **Eliminate user-initiated email archiving.** For many users, email archiving consists of manually selecting emails and saving them to an archived folder in a PST file. There is no guarantee that the user will archive the right emails or will archive them at all. Implementing a network email archiving solution will remove this burden from staff members and ensure that all emails are archived properly.

Archive Methods

As with most computer options, there are hardware and software solutions.

Hardware

Email archive appliances have been created that either drop-in as a **plug-n-play device** or they **integrate with your network** for a custom fit. Price is generally the determining factor between the two. Nearly all appliances will integrate with MS Exchange, MS Outlook, Lotus Notes, or any other IMAP or POP3 email system. If this option seems appealing, keep in mind that some devices are capable of upgrading while others are non-upgradeable (storage and RAM cannot be changed at a later time if your needs change).

Software

Another option is to deploy software that handles all of your email archive needs. Software that integrates with MS Outlook and MS Exchange can appear seamless to the end user.

For **Outlook** users, archive and search folders are added to the Folder List. When a user wants to search their personal email archive they simply click on the folder and enter the search terms or phrases. The results, which include individual emails as well as message threads, are displayed within Outlook directly.

For businesses that currently run **MS Exchange**, all of the email data is stored in one or several **SQL databases** for easy storage and retrieval. This eliminates the need for users to archive their email in PST files on local machines (freeing up valuable hard drive space).

Features to look for:

- A program that compresses and decompresses attachments automatically,
- One-step retrieval and restoration of archived emails,
- A central store of emails for efficient searching, and
- A rights management feature where an individual can be granted access to group emails.

If you have more than one location, some software programs can handle multiple remote sites. So even if the offices are in different counties, states or countries, archived emails can be stored in one central location.

Summary

In deciding between a hardware and software solution, keep in mind that software solutions are generally more flexible than hardware solutions. For instance, it is usually more cost effective to add storage space or memory modules to a server rather than an appliance. Give us a call if you are interested in installing a hardware or software option that will work with your network.