



Bridgestone Australia Improves Control of Email Compliance with Exchange Server 2007

Overview

Country or Region: Australia

Industry: Automotive

Customer Profile

Bridgestone Australia is a manufacturer, wholesaler and retailer of tires and a range of related products. It employs 1,620 people across a nationwide network of 260 retail outlets.

Business Situation

Staff were manually archiving old emails to their PC hard drives to reduce the size of their mailboxes. The company could not manage these messages, leading to compliance problems.

Solution

Bridgestone ran a pilot project that migrated 100 users to Microsoft Exchange Server 2007 to investigate the benefits of features such as Managed Folders and Cluster Continuous Replication.

Benefits

- Centralized email storage.
- Universal archiving and retention policies.
- Increased availability.
- Boosted user productivity.
- Streamlined management.

“Some of the differences are minor, but all the one per-centers really add up to a great package.”

Jamie Brooks, Manager – Network Systems, Bridgestone Australia Ltd.

Bridgestone Australia Ltd. (Bridgestone) is a major supplier to the Australian automotive industry. It employs 1,620 people across Australia. The company found many of its 850 email users were archiving old messages to their local hard drives to minimize mailbox sizes, which increased the potential for compliance issues. Working with Microsoft Gold Certified Partner HP, Bridgestone participated in the Rapid Deployment Program for Microsoft® Exchange Server 2007 and migrated 100 users to the new platform. The server's ability to handle larger mailboxes and the Managed Folders feature will allow users to store all messages on the server where they can be covered by corporate retention and archiving policies. Cluster Continuous Replication is enabling Bridgestone to design a high-availability server architecture. Bridgestone also expects the new platform to help boost productivity for staff and administrators.



Situation

Bridgestone is a major supplier to the Australian automotive industry and one of the largest employers in South Australia. Best known as a manufacturer, wholesaler and retailer of tires, the company also manufactures carpet underlay, retreads truck tires and distributes a wide range of golf products. Having started business in 1939 with a workforce of just 12 people, it now employs 1,620 people nationwide.

Since 1981, Bridgestone Corporation of Japan, the world's largest manufacturer of tires and other rubber products, has been its major shareholder. Bridgestone has a proud tradition of innovation and development, resulting in products that set new standards for quality and performance.

Email is a critical business tool for staff at Bridgestone's head office in Adelaide and its network of 260 retail outlets around the country. The company's Information Systems division manages approximately 850 mailboxes using Microsoft Exchange Server 2003 and staff use the messaging platform for appointments, collaboration, remote access and booking resources such as meeting rooms.

"Because of the limitations of our email setup, staff had to keep their mailboxes small and archive older messages to their hard drives to relieve the pressure," says Jamie Brooks, Manager – Network Systems at Bridgestone. "The problem with doing this was that the organization lost visibility of those emails. It was easy for information to get lost and hard to know what was out there from a compliance perspective."

This meant the company could not reliably say it had copies of email messages that might be required for legal reasons.

"We wanted to bring all those messages into the Exchange Server environment so we could manage them with retention and archiving policies," says Brooks.

"From a security point of view, viruses could be sitting dormant for years then, when people access their old emails, they could introduce those viruses back into our systems."

The company also faced the possibility of a lengthy outage should its messaging server fail and need to be restored from backup.

"With the importance of email nowadays, we couldn't afford to have the server down for so long," says Brooks. "We wanted to run a secondary server at another site for disaster recovery and replicate email between them to ensure that, if one went down unexpectedly, the other would be able to keep things running."

Solution

Working with long-term technology partner HP, a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner, Bridgestone participated in the Rapid Deployment Program for Microsoft Exchange Server 2007.

Microsoft Exchange Server 2007 offers robust, interoperable, server-based unified communications tools that integrate with desktop and mobile clients to give information workers access to voice, fax, and email data from wherever they are. It also allows people to use the telephone to manage their email, calendar and personal contacts.

"First we emulated Bridgestone's technology setup in a virtual environment we built off site," says Jon Lambert, Technical Lead at HP. "Then we ported this over to Bridgestone's real technology environment

and ran some tests to see whether the features and functionality they were looking for would work there.”

Bridgestone ran a pilot project, migrating 100 users to the Microsoft Exchange Server 2007 environment by September 2006. Some remained using the Microsoft® Office Outlook® 2003 client while others upgraded their desktop systems to Microsoft Office Outlook 2007.

“Exchange Server 2007 really doesn’t look or feel any different to users who are still running Office Outlook 2003, but I’m trialing it with Office Outlook 2007 and the combined functionality is incredible,” says Darren Denley, Corporate Manager – Information Systems at Bridgestone.

“Bridgestone’s IT department is very good at what they do and did a lot of the work themselves,” adds Lambert. “We told them what they needed to do and they ran the migration without any further assistance.”

Two features of Microsoft Exchange Server 2007 particularly appealed to Bridgestone as being able to address the issues they face: Managed Folders and Cluster Continuous Replication.

Exchange Server 2007 allows an Exchange Server administrator to create a Managed Folder that appears in the folder list of a user’s mailbox. The administrator can apply rules and age limits, such as retaining messages from certain companies for seven years. When a user receives a message that requires that level of compliance, he or she simply moves the message into the Managed Folder.

“The Managed Folders feature is one of the main areas where Bridgestone believes Exchange Server 2007 will help them out,” says Lambert. “They can put any email

relating to a specific topic in a Managed Folder and they know it will stay there for the duration required for compliance.”

Cluster Continuous Replication provides redundancy for Microsoft Exchange Server 2007 services and information stores. If an active Microsoft Exchange Server 2007 system fails, it can automatically fail over to a secondary server. In earlier versions of Exchange Server, both the primary and secondary servers needed to share the same storage.

Cluster Continuous Replication synchronizes the Exchange Server data between the two servers, eliminating the need for shared storage. This makes it much easier to run a high-availability Microsoft Exchange Server environment across multiple sites.

At time of writing, Bridgestone had not finished evaluating the Cluster Continuous Replication capabilities of Microsoft Exchange Server 2007.

Benefits

Having implemented the pilot project, Bridgestone has identified a range of benefits it could achieve from a company-wide rollout of Microsoft Exchange Server 2007. These include improved email archiving and retention; the ability to deploy a high-availability architecture; increased user productivity and remote access; and streamlined management for administrators.

Archiving and Retention Policies for Compliance

Centralizing email messages from users’ PC hard drives into the Exchange Server environment will give Bridgestone increased control over document retention and archiving and help it ensure that all relevant email messages and attachments are

available if required for legal or compliance reasons.

In addition, Microsoft Exchange Server 2007 is a native 64-bit application, which allows it to operate with larger database and mailbox sizes than could previous versions. Bridgestone's staff will be able to keep all relevant emails in their Exchange Server mailboxes without the need for manual archiving.

"This forms a central part of our IT strategy to have maximum visibility of all our corporate data," says Denley. "People tend to use Office Outlook as a document storage facility. Although it's not really intended for that use, this way we can put rules and policies around it to manage that data more effectively."

With Microsoft Exchange Server 2007, Bridgestone will be able to set up Managed Folders for users in situations where compliance might be an issue.

"Bridgestone's IT department will be able to give users compliance folders if they need to conduct due diligence with a particular customer or in the legal or finance department where they need to retain all documents for seven years," says Lambert. "This way, users always know how and where to store emails. If they need to search emails for any reason – legal, compliance or customer service – all the information is in one place and easy to find."

A High-Availability Messaging Environment

HP has designed Bridgestone's Microsoft Exchange Server 2007 architecture as a cluster, with a server at a secondary site connected to the primary server over the company's wide-area network. The two servers will be kept synchronized using Cluster Continuous Replication.

This will ensure the constant availability of Bridgestone's email and messaging environment for staff and avoid the productivity loss of a lengthy service outage.

"When this architecture is fully implemented, if one datacenter becomes unavailable, Bridgestone can fail over to its disaster recovery datacenter and email will continue to function," says Lambert.

Improved Productivity and Remote Access

Microsoft Exchange Server 2007 makes it easier for users to find, share and use information, no matter what their location. In a geographically dispersed organization like Bridgestone, this will improve company-wide productivity.

Microsoft Exchange Server 2007 allows users to access their email in a variety of ways:

- **Office Outlook Anywhere** allows users to access their mailboxes from any computer running Microsoft Office Outlook 2007 and connected to the Internet. The Autodiscover feature automates the process of connecting to Exchange Server.
- The improved **Office Outlook Web Access** has a new look and feel similar to Microsoft Office Outlook 2007 as well as better search and address book features.
- Mobile devices running Microsoft Windows Mobile can seamlessly access their Exchange Server-based email, calendar, contacts and tasks using **Microsoft Exchange Server ActiveSync®**.
- **Office Outlook Voice Access**, a feature of Exchange Server Unified Messaging, lets users work with their mailboxes, calendars and contacts over the phone using speech recognition or touch tones.

"Some of the changes seem simple but are quite powerful," says Denley. "The new Out-of-Office Assistant can be configured to send

different messages to internal and external people and people on your contact list. It can deactivate automatically the day you come back to the office.

“The new Office Outlook Web Access interface is much neater, well laid out and has very rich functionality in calendaring and meeting requests.

“The new scheduling features are also a big improvement,” Denley continues. “When you’re trying to arrange a meeting between multiple people, it makes it much easier to see who’s free and who isn’t.”

Bridgestone also intends to make use of the advanced integration with devices running Microsoft® Windows Mobile™.

“If someone loses a handheld PC, they can log into Office Outlook Web Access and have the server wipe the device remotely,” says Denley. “They can even do this out of hours without having to contact the help desk. This will help protect our corporate data.”

Automated Management

Microsoft Exchange Server 2007 reduces the amount of repetitive manual work administrators need to perform in day-to-day maintenance, monitoring and troubleshooting.

The modular server roles architecture makes the system easier to deploy. The Exchange Server Management Console gives administrators a single interface in which they can manage the entire messaging environment, and the Exchange Server Management Shell is a powerful scripting tool.

“We found Microsoft Exchange Server 2007 much easier to deploy than previous versions; we could even install it from the command line,” says Brooks. “It was also much easier

to perform bulk operations on large numbers of mailboxes.”

Brooks also found the ability to apply policies to users, rather than servers or storage groups, a great deal more flexible.

“The system messages are a lot friendlier,” he says. “When users receive a warning that their mailbox is getting too full, it comes with a graph and is fully customizable.

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