

ISC10D042

Email archiving and guidelines on best practice

Author: Raymond Scott (ISD)

Date: 1 June 2011

This is an update on the work to introduce a centrally managed email archiving solution.

Pilot in ITCS

Since early January 2011, ITCS has been running a pilot of Microsoft Exchange message archiving software Quest Archive Manager (QAM). The software allows for email older than a pre-determined date to be moved from the Exchange mailbox to the Quest Archive Manager or deleted if required thereby reducing the size of the mailbox. We are currently working with Quest Software to ensure that the policies ISD put in place to support this service are sensible and meet both user and infrastructure requirements.

All emails for all staff mailboxes are being 'exported' in order that QAM knows about the emails but only ITCS mailboxes are being processed for archiving. In ITCS, all email folders, not just Inbox and Sent Items have the strip emails older than 6 months policy enabled. At present, this is the only policy enabled.

On average, a user's mailbox in ITCS has been reduced in size by between two thirds and a half. The overall storage reduction currently predicted based on the 'exported' messages is 40%. It is difficult to give an exact figure for just ITCS but the savings are significant.

Information compliance

Any email archiving solution needs to support our obligations for information compliance. Specifically, we need to ensure that any emails intentionally deleted from a user's mailbox are also removed from the archive. That way, we can be confident we do not hold any copies of the emails. QAM, however, does not currently support cascade deletions from the mailbox to the archive, and the only way to remove emails from the archive is via retention policies based on a variety of characteristics of the email such as age, subject, tags, mailbox or organisational unit.

Quest has submitted our cascading deletions requirement to their product team as an enhancement request. We do not have firm timescales for when it will be available, but expect it to feature within 12 months.

Next steps

At this stage, we cannot recommend QAM for wider roll out across the University. In the meantime, Information Services will fund from the contingencies budget an increase in staff mailbox quotas on Exchange.