



Ferrier Hodgson Group

Eliminating Email and Backup Challenges with Symantec and XSI Data Solutions Saves More Than 195,000 AUD

Email is critical to Ferrier Hodgson Group, but its rapidly expanding volume of email became expensive to store, difficult to search, and made backup windows too long. Symantec email management and data protection solutions have enabled Ferrier Hodgson to achieve 40 percent compression of its email store, reduce related IT staff costs by thousands of dollars, cut backup times in half, and dramatically improve server and file recovery time.

Email is company's lifeblood

Saving financially troubled companies is akin to performing a life or death operation. It requires a highly skilled surgeon with the right tools.

Companies in Asia-Pacific view Ferrier Hodgson much like a patient views a medical specialist. Whether actually saving the company from bankruptcy or managing insolvency with an eye toward protecting business assets and employees as much as possible, Ferrier Hodgson has a reputation for providing pragmatic, results-oriented solutions. Established in 1976, the company's more than 40 partners and 300 staff, located in offices throughout Australia, New Zealand, and Asia-Pacific, assist with turnaround, reconstruction, financial advisory, and forensics. The complicated scenarios they handle may involve restructuring, financial monitoring, asset management, discovery of corporate wrongdoing, or even liquidation.

Ferrier Hodgson has the right people and expertise, but needed help at its Sydney office improving instruments critical to its operations—email messages and attachments. According to Mustafa Mohabbat, IT Manager for Ferrier Hodgson's Sydney office, email was especially critical. "Aside from the phone, email is the most important collaboration and communication tool we have. Our staff absolutely relies on email and attachments to be available and easily searchable to conduct business."

For Ferrier Hodgson's two-person IT staff in Sydney, the challenge was to shrink its email store, improve search capability, and enhance email and file system backup to ensure data availability.

Email and data store approach critical condition

The volume of email at Ferrier, as at almost every company, was growing faster than expected. In 2004, it contributed to a total data store at the Sydney office of 140GB, increasing at 20 percent annually.

"With email as our most important application and data preservation and availability key to our survival, Symantec solutions protect us extraordinarily well. They have turned around our data management capabilities so that we can better focus on turning around our client companies."

Mustafa Mohabbat

IT Manager

Ferrier Hodgson Group

Organization Profile

The Ferrier Hodgson Group (www.fh.com.au), with its 300-person international team of consultants and financial advisors, provides restructure and turn-around management, insolvency management, corporate forensics, and financial advisory services to businesses worldwide. Based in Sydney, Australia, Ferrier Hodgson has offices in all major Australian capital cities, New Zealand, and throughout Asia.

Industry

Financial Services

Solution

Email and Data Management
Data Protection and Restoration

The Symantec email management solution located 20GB of PST files on the network and migrated them to a secure, searchable central repository.

To control demands on storage, Mohabbat established user mailbox size quotas. Many users responded by offloading email messages into bulky Microsoft Personal Information Store (PST) archive files. Some uploaded these files to the file server, increasing demands on storage. Others kept PST files on their hard disks, where they were easily lost when computers failed or were upgraded. Searches were also difficult. Email in PST files isn't searchable unless reinstalled in Microsoft Outlook—and even then, searches are slow and cumbersome. This also made eDiscovery requests to IT staff lengthy.

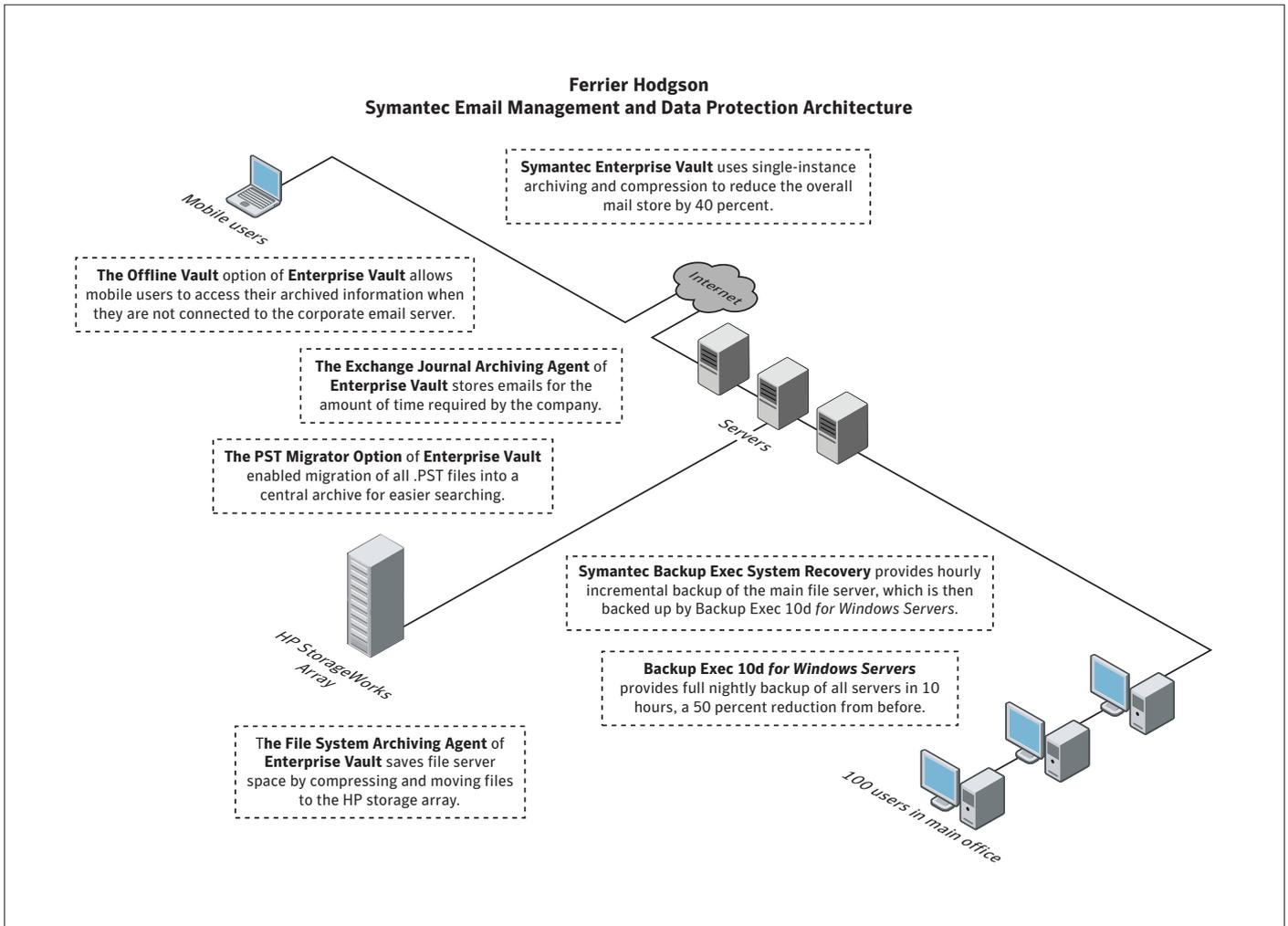
Enterprise Vault takes the pressure off

After looking at competing products, Ferrier Hodgson purchased Symantec Enterprise Vault™ in 2004 from Symantec Business Partner XSI Data Solutions. Enterprise Vault was the only product at the time that offered email and file archiving, was easy to deploy, and required little user training.

A technical support engineer from XSI worked alongside a consultant from Symantec Consulting Services on the deployment. “The Symantec consultant was an absolute top gun with Enterprise Vault and had an intimate understanding of Microsoft Exchange,” says Mohabbat. “Along with XSI, he was able to speed our time to value, getting us up and running on Enterprise Vault in two weeks.”

“The entire scenario became a nightmare,” relates Mohabbat. “My IT staff in Sydney manages about 100 active email accounts. One-third of the help desk calls we received prior to 2004 were related to email or PSTs. For usability, good governance, and because we're in the public eye, it became imperative that we centralize email archiving and management.”

Since then, Enterprise Vault has addressed each of the company's email challenges.



Gaining control over proliferating data

“Enterprise Vault took control of our 20 percent annual data growth,” says Mohabbat. “I haven’t worried about increasing storage volume since we purchased the solution, and IT administration time has remained the same despite the growth.”

Transparent to users, Enterprise Vault automatically offloads and compresses old email from Microsoft Exchange servers, storing multiple instances of the same attachment only once. The result was an immediate 40 percent reduction in Ferrier Hodgson’s email storage, from 80GB to 50GB. This let the IT team remove unpopular email quotas.

To save file space, Mohabbat chose the File System Archiving Agent of Enterprise Vault. It automatically compresses and moves files from the Microsoft Windows file server to an HP StorageWorks NAS 2000 disc array, where users can easily search and retrieve items.

“By helping us avoid the purchase of additional Microsoft Exchange servers and licenses, and file servers, and by buying fewer SATA discs for the array, Enterprise Vault is saving us 26,000 AUD (20,000 USD) annually,” Mohabbat says.

Goodbye to the PST problem

Enterprise Vault also puts an end to PSTs. “With the PST Migrator Option, Enterprise Vault automatically locates all PST files on our network, migrates them to a central archive repository, and makes the full text of all content, including attachments, easily searchable by all users,” Mohabbat explains. “It found and secured 20GB of PST files on our network.”

Because Enterprise Vault indexes messages, it searches them faster than Outlook does. Mohabbat decided to shorten the time until messages are archived from 120 days to 60, so that more of email archive is search-

SOLUTION AT A GLANCE

Business Drivers

- Protect business-critical email communication from loss or corruption
- Minimize downtime issues with email
- Improve business user productivity
- Improve administration of data resources
- Enhance corporate governance and improve ability to meet requests for discovery

Technology Challenges

- Create logical, searchable, secure email archive
- Reduce backup windows and ensure fast, reliable backups of critical servers
- Minimize downtime associated with server recovery
- Reduce complexity of managing data

Solution

- Automated email archiving for 100 users and efficient server and file backups at main office

Symantec Products

- Symantec Enterprise Vault™ with:
 - PST Migrator Option
 - Offline Vault Option
 - File System Archiving Agent
 - Exchange Journal Archiving Agent
 - Exchange Public Folder Archiving Option
- Symantec Backup Exec™ 10d for Windows® Servers
- Symantec Backup Exec System Recovery

Symantec Services

- Symantec Technical Support
- Symantec Consulting Services

Symantec Partner

- XSI Data Solutions

Technology Environment

- Applications: Microsoft Office 2003, Microsoft Exchange, Microsoft Outlook, proprietary financial applications
- Databases: Microsoft SQL Server 2000
- Server Platform: 10 HP ProLiant DL380 G3s running Microsoft Windows 2003
- Storage: HP StorageWorks NAS 2000 disc array

able using Enterprise Vault. Ferrier Hodgson uses the Exchange Public Folder Archiving Option of Enterprise Vault to store job-related email messages in a logical format that mimics a file server and enables email messages to be indexed for simplified searching. Faster searches and easy access to PST files have improved employee productivity five percent.

“Enterprise Vault took control of our 20 percent annual data growth. I haven’t worried about increasing storage volume since we purchased the solution, and IT administration time has remained the same despite the growth.”

Mustafa Mohabbat

IT Manager

Ferrier Hodgson Group

“The Symantec consultant was an absolute top gun with Enterprise Vault and had an intimate understanding of Microsoft Exchange. Along with XSI, he was able to speed our time to value, getting us up and running on Enterprise Vault in two weeks.”

Mustafa Mohabbat

IT Manager
Ferrier Hodgson Group

The IT team also chose the Offline Vault Option of Enterprise Vault to allow mobile and remote users to work with their email even when they aren't connected to the network. Employees can archive email messages to the central archive to ensure they not lost or damaged, and when disconnected, staff can still retrieve archived items from the local vault.

Improved eDiscovery

The gain in search capability has also streamlined eDiscovery. Mohabbat had typically received four discovery requests per month.

“IT staff previously spent up to four hours per request finding and loading the tape, doing an index search, and recovering and restoring the email. Now, with a transparent and completely searchable archive, Enterprise Vault enables users to find the information themselves.”

Requests have dropped 75 percent, reducing IT staff time spent on eDiscovery by 98 percent, to about four hours a year, saving approximately 13,000 AUD (10,000 USD) annually.

The IT team also purchased the Exchange Journal Archiving Agent of Enterprise Vault, which copies, catalogs, and indexes all incoming and outgoing email, making it easier to retain all email for seven years, per company policy, and further enhances eDiscovery searches.

Meanwhile, because searching PST files is no longer an issue, IT help desk calls have dropped by 10 percent, saving the same amount in IT staff time, for an annual savings of 13,000 AUD (10,000 USD).

The combined savings achieved from using Enterprise Vault has given Ferrier Hodgson a 100 percent payback on its investment in only two years.

Safeguarding all data

Before the Symantec solutions, as overall data volume increased, so did backup windows. They were as long as 20 hours, running into the next workday. Backups sometimes remained uncompleted, exposing the business to potential data loss. Server recovery could take two to three days; restoring individual files, hours.

To gain control over its backups, Ferrier Hodgson, in 2002, upgraded to Symantec Backup Exec™ 10d for Windows® Servers and purchased Symantec Backup Exec System Recovery, Server Edition. Together, these provide a complete and complimentary backup and restoration solution.

Shorter and smarter backups

“We use Backup Exec System Recovery on all servers as part of our disaster recovery strategy and as our first responder for recovery of files and servers,” explains Mohabbat. “File servers are incrementally backed up on the hour, with the images stored on network attached storage, and then archived to tape via Symantec Backup Exec 10d for offsite storage.”

The Symantec solutions have reduced the backup window by at least 50 percent, from 20 hours to 8 to 10 hours, allowing IT staff to easily complete backups without impacting operations. Incremental backups of the file server enhance the company's Recovery Point Objective (RPO), reducing the amount of data that can be lost from one day to one hour.

It is also far easier to recover data. “Our former recovery process took several hours, requiring us to recall the tape and recover the file to disk,” says Mohabbat. “Usually, it wasn't worth IT staff's time to recover files that users had only been working on for a short time. But with Symantec Backup Exec System Recovery, we can recover files in a minute or two, rather than in an hour or two.”

BUSINESS VALUE AND TECHNICAL BENEFITS

Data Protection/Availability

- Full retention of business-critical email messages and related documents
- Reduced Recovery Point Objective (RPO) from one workday to one hour
- 97% reduction in server recovery time (72 hours to 2 hours)
- 98% reduction in file recovery from tape (60 minutes to 1 minute)
- Reduced backup time by at least 50% (20 hours down to 8 to 10 hours)

Scalability

- Approximately 40% compression in email storage (80GB to 50GB)
- Ability to handle 20% annual data growth with no increase in administration time

Productivity

- 98% reduction in IT staff time spent on eDiscovery email requests (192 to 4 hours), saving an estimated 13,000 AUD (10,000 USD) annually
- 5% increased business user productivity due to ability to easily search centrally archived email messages and simultaneously access PST files

Operational Efficiency/ Savings

- 10% savings in IT staff time due to 10% fewer help desk calls, saving an estimated 13,000 AUD (10,000 USD) annually in IT staff time
- Avoided 143,000 AUD (110,000 USD) in lost productivity by minimizing downtime from server failures
- Improved storage utilization forestalled the purchase of additional servers and storage discs, saving 26,000 AUD (20,000 USD) annually

Return on investment

- 100% payback in one year for Backup Exec System Recovery; two years for Enterprise Vault

Keeping servers and productivity online

Bare metal server restorations now take typically two hours, rather than two to three days, a 97 percent reduction. Considering that Ferrier Hodgson has had to restore servers seven times since purchasing Backup Exec System Recovery, the impact to the bottom line is huge. The company has avoided 143,000 AUD (110,000 USD) in productivity losses.

With those kinds of savings, Backup Exec System Recovery has paid for itself in one year.

“With email as our most important application and data preservation and availability key to our survival, Symantec solutions protect us extraordinarily well,” says Mohabbat. “They have turned around our data management capabilities so that we can better focus on turning around our client companies.” ■