

# Why Good Reporting Is Vital to the Health of Your **E-mail System**

By Michael Osterman





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## About the Author

**Michael Osterman** is the principal of Osterman Research, Inc., founded in 2001. Since that time, the company has become one of the leading analyst firms in the messaging and collaboration space, providing research, analysis, white papers and other services to companies like Microsoft, IBM, Sun Microsystems, Google, Novell, EMC, Tumbleweed, Hewlett Packard and many others. Michael is a frequent speaker at industry and vendor-sponsored events on the topics of archiving, instant messaging, presence and other messaging- and collaboration-focused issues.

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## Executive Summary

E-mail is critical to the information flow in most organizations and the most important communications and file management tool used by employees: 80 percent of all information sent by employees is transmitted through e-mail, and nine out of ten e-mail users consider their desktop e-mail client “valuable” or “extremely valuable” in helping them to perform their work.

However, e-mail systems don’t always work as they should. Systems are often cobbled together as the result of poor planning, mergers, and acquisitions. Inefficient user behavior and undiagnosed performance issues cause downtime, message delivery delays and other problems. And the growing prevalence of e-mail-related policies designed for compliance with legal and regulatory requirements complicate the messaging environment.

This white paper, sponsored by Quest Software, explains how a good e-mail reporting system can help decision makers better understand their e-mail systems and enable them to:

- Reduce the cost of messaging capabilities
- Postpone or avoid infrastructure additions
- Improve service levels
- Mitigate the risk of non-compliance

The paper then describes how Quest MessageStats, an e-mail reporting system designed for the Microsoft Exchange environment provides these benefits and more.

“A good email reporting system can help organizations reduce costs, improve service levels, and increase compliance.”

## E-mail is Critical, but Can Have Significant Problems

### E-MAIL IS VITAL TO THE WAY PEOPLE WORK

Virtually everyone who deals with information for a living, as well as many people who don’t, relies heavily on e-mail to do their work. According to recent Osterman Research surveys:

- 92 percent of e-mail users consider their desktop e-mail capability to be either “valuable” or “extremely valuable” in helping them to perform their work.

- 80 percent of all communication sent by employees on a typical day goes through e-mail.
- 55 percent of e-mail that individuals receive at work is considered to be either critical or important.
- Three out of four e-mail users check work-related e-mail from home on weekdays and weekends.

The growth of mobile e-mail (considered by 66 percent of users to be “important” or “extremely important”), e-discovery efforts and the use of e-mail for archiving business records add to e-mail’s impact on the organization.

## BUT E-MAIL SYSTEMS DON’T WORK AS WELL AS THEY SHOULD

Users and organizations are increasingly dependent on e-mail, but e-mail systems often do not work as they should. According to a recent Osterman Research survey, 26 percent of organizations experience more than 30 minutes of downtime each month in their e-mail systems. Even when e-mail systems are up and running, message delivery performance may suffer. Databases can become corrupted, and a host of other problems can occur.

One reason that e-mail systems often underperform is the patchwork infrastructure that occurs over time. Mergers, acquisitions, inconsistent technology modifications, changes in direction by new CIOs or IT management and other factors can create an inefficient and precarious messaging environment.

Another reason for poor e-mail system performance is inappropriate user behavior. For example, e-mail users often send humorous or interesting videos, images, and audio files using their corporate e-mail accounts, sapping e-mail system storage and bandwidth. Even users sending valid corporate content may not use e-mail efficiently. For instance, a marketing manager might want to send a newsletter to 6,000 customers, but e-mailing an 850-kilobyte PDF file to each recipient would strain e-mail resources: it would require 5.1 gigabytes of bandwidth and at least 5.1 gigabytes of storage on the e-mail server. This could dramatically slow e-mail server performance, delay network message delivery, and potentially crash the e-mail server. A better solution might be to post the PDF file to a web server and send the 6,000 customers a link to the file; this will result in more than a 99 percent savings in both bandwidth and storage and have little impact on e-mail server performance.

Inferior e-mail performance can also be caused by failing to match bandwidth to e-mail requirements. For example, sending large file attachments to a field office in another

country with strict bandwidth limitations may max out available resources.

## **POLICY ENFORCEMENT IS INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT**

Internal and external regulations, such as the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, Sarbanes-Oxley, and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), require organizations to better monitor and control their e-mail systems through the archiving of e-mail and support of e-discovery efforts.

Unfortunately, many businesses don't realize that an employee who sends an illegally downloaded song to another employee can expose the employer to legal issues with the Recording Industry Association of America. An employee who sends racist or sexist jokes to a friend can make his employer liable for millions of dollars in damages and transmitting protected health information in an unencrypted e-mail can violate Federal law.

To prevent e-mail performance issues and comply with regulations, organizations of all sizes and in all industries must develop a set of policies around appropriate use of e-mail. The right tools will make enforcing these policies more effective and less time-consuming.

“Organizations of all sizes and in all industries must develop a set of policies around appropriate use of e-mail, and they need tools to help them enforce those policies.”

## **How a Quality E-mail Reporting System Can Help**

### **BENEFITS OF AN E-MAIL REPORTING SOLUTION**

Implementing a quality e-mail reporting solution can help improve an organization's e-mail performance and regulatory compliance by providing the following benefits:

- **Reduce total cost of ownership (TCO)**  
Osterman Research has found that many corporate decision makers underestimate the actual cost of providing messaging services to their users, and the vast majority are not confident in their estimates. Accurate reporting

of costs facilitates more accurate chargebacks and assists in future planning. This helps an organization make more cost-effective decisions about infrastructure changes and additions.

- **Plan for (and potentially postpone or eliminate) capacity additions**

A good reporting solution helps organizations identify where resources need to be reallocated and how users can be more efficient. This facilitates informed decisions when purchasing servers, storage, bandwidth, and other costly infrastructure elements.

- **Support migration efforts**

The typical lifespan of a messaging system is three to four years, after which most organizations migrate to a new messaging system or upgrade to the new version of the same messaging platform. A good reporting system facilitates migration by determining where messaging data and resources are located, and identifying which servers and desktops can be used in the new system.

- **Improve service levels**

Finding storage and bandwidth bottlenecks and identifying users who are not using e-mail efficiently can help administrators make adjustments to improve service levels.

- **Mitigate the risks of non-compliance**

Failure to comply with legal requirements, regulatory obligations, corporate policies, and best practices can create problems ranging from a damaged reputation to enormous legal judgments. In rare cases, non-compliance has triggered criminal prosecution of corporate executives.

### **REPORTING SHOULD BE CUSTOMIZABLE**

A good reporting solution should create customizable reports designed to provide useful information to a variety of people within an organization. An e-mail administrator needs a detailed report on user behavior, while a compliance officer must identify incidents of non-compliance with corporate or legal policies. A senior manager will want a report that identifies the costs of providing messaging services, and a CIO will find value in a report that forecasts when and what new investments in the e-mail infrastructure will be required.

# About Quest MessageStats

## OVERVIEW

Quest developed the award-winning MessageStats™ to empower executives, IT managers, and Exchange administrators to analyze and report on Exchange e-mail infrastructures:

- Decision makers can leverage usage information for economic modeling and confirm operational success, justify budgets, focus investments, and reduce overall costs.
- Exchange operational staff can leverage traffic, volume, capacity, uptime, inventory, and audit reports to isolate bottlenecks, tune operations, and ensure service delivery.
- Human resources and legal departments can use audit reports for investigations and to confirm compliance with corporate policy and external legislation.

Providing a complete view of all messaging components from one interface, MessageStats delivers business- and technical-focused reports for: BlackBerry, Windows Mobile, Microsoft Office Communications Server, Microsoft Exchange, Outlook Web Access, Sendmail/Postfix, and Quest Archive Manager.

“MessageStats helps organizations reduce costs, improve performance, and comply with regulations.”

## FEATURES

MessageStats enables you to do all of the following:

- **Perform economic modeling**  
MessageStats empowers you to justify expenses and create accurate forecasts, leading to informed decisions concerning operational requirements, migration plans, capacity needs, and archiving opportunities.
- **Improve Exchange capacity management**  
With MessageStats, you can easily determine the capacity of your Exchange system to handle short- and long-term growth rates. It provides clear visibility at all levels: organizational, departmental, and even individual mailbox level.

- **Promote efficient service delivery**

Whether you want to align with industry best practices or simply deliver the performance and availability required by your service level agreements, MessageStats provides the necessary metrics to understand and tune Exchange operations.

- **Increase migration efficiencies**

From planning to lifecycle management, MessageStats inventory reports provide detailed Exchange assessments in order to significantly decrease the risks and costs associated with migration.

- **Comply with e-mail system regulations**

MessageStats facilitates compliance with internal and external regulations. For example, you can easily get details about all messages sent and received by a specific individual, you can filter and retrieve messages with a given subject keyword, or locate those exchanged with a questionable Simple Mail Transfer Protocol (SMTP) domain.

- **Measure total cost of ownership**

By providing data detailing the volume of traffic flowing through your Exchange environment and the storage space consumed by messages, MessageStats enables you to deliver an accurate estimate of per-message cost.

## REPORTS

MessageStats offers flexible reporting and auditing with a wide variety of reports, including the following:

- **Customizable at-a-glance dashboards**

Enterprise-reporting dashboards help you quickly find information, and you can customize the reports with more than 400 graphs and tables representing every aspect of Exchange operations.

- **Executive summary reports**

You can review top-level metrics to confirm operational success in service delivery, understand messaging system traffic and capacity, and model financials for your Exchange environment.

- **Business unit reporting**

MessageStats helps you understand how your e-mail system facilitates your corporate objectives. Multiple reporting perspectives provide business-focused Exchange data at the organizational, departmental, organizational unit, and regional levels.

- **Inventory reporting**

MessageStats summarizes key configuration data across organizations, sites, administrative groups, routing

groups, servers and server roles, storage groups, mailbox and public stores, mailboxes, and more.

- **Comprehensive public folder reporting**  
Public folder reports provide end-to-end visibility on all public folders and replicas in one or more Exchange organizations. Data includes public folder owners, public folder permissions, last content modification date, document counts, and sub-folder counts.
- **Auditing**  
You can audit key components such as keywords, delivery time, message-level history of all traffic to and from SMTP domains, and message header information. Audit reporting fields include the message ID to facilitate further investigation with native tools.
- **Custom reporting and subscriptions**  
Business users can quickly customize reports using the Custom Report Wizard.
- **The details**  
MessageStats is easy to deploy, easy to use, and easy on your infrastructure:
- **Data collection**  
MessageStats automates data collection from tracking logs and other data sources. It supports multiple Exchange organizations and stores only the data needed for reporting.
- **Agentless architecture with small footprint**  
MessageStats has a non-intrusive, agentless architecture that facilitates deployment, even in large distributed organizations. No client installation is required.
- **Integrated solution**  
MessageStats Admin Console operates within the Microsoft Management Console (MMC) so you can create a custom MMC with all of your favorite tools, like ADUC, ESM, and ADSI Edit.

## Summary

E-mail systems are the most important communication and file transport mechanism for organizations today. However, decision makers often do not have enough information about where e-mail bottlenecks exist, which users are inefficient in their use of e-mail, when new storage and bandwidth must be added, and whether the messaging environment complies with regulatory policies.

A good reporting solution will provide information on how e-mail is being used, where inefficiencies exist, and when new capacity will be needed. It should provide customizable reporting capabilities so that every group in an organization—both technical and non-technical—receives the information they need to make appropriate decisions. Good reporting will lower the cost of providing messaging services, improve service levels, and mitigate the risk of failing to comply with regulations. Quest MessageStats provides all of these benefits in one award-winning Exchange reporting solution.

## ABOUT QUEST SOFTWARE

Quest Software, Inc., a leading enterprise systems management vendor, delivers innovative products that help organizations get more performance and productivity from their applications, databases, Windows infrastructure and virtual environments. Through a deep expertise in IT operations and a continued focus on what works best, Quest helps more than 90,000 customers worldwide meet higher expectations for enterprise IT. Quest provides customers with client management as well as server and desktop virtualization solutions through its subsidiaries, ScriptLogic and Vizioncore. Quest Software can be found in offices around the globe and at [www.quest.com](http://www.quest.com).



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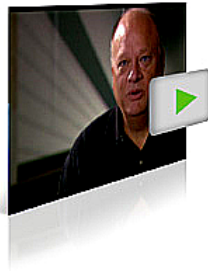
## Exchange and OCS Migration



Building a future-ready foundation to improve collaboration, organizational governance, performance and efficiency starts with migrating to Exchange or Office Communications Server. For Exchange, it's not just about the mailbox move; storage, planning and performance concerns all play a role. For OCS, it's about bridging organizational boundaries between data and voice, getting labs and pilots ramped up, and deploying in a manner that minimizes risk and maximizes ROI.

**Quest Solutions for Exchange and OCS Migrations** include everything you need to plan and execute a successful ZeroIMPACT™ migration to Exchange Server 2007, whether you are migrating from Exchange 5.5, 200x, Lotus Notes or Novell GroupWise. Quest provides solutions to help you measure and justify ROI as you are testing or deploying OCS 2007.

From **analyzing and planning**, to **ensuring performance** and **data recovery**, to **reducing messaging volumes**, Quest provides assurance that your migration will be fast and efficient, that your end users will be able to collaborate, and that your organization will be exposed to less risk.



### **Video: Quest talks about the importance of Exchange 2007**

Quest expert Doug talks about the importance of Exchange 2007.

[▶ Watch the Video](#)



### **White Paper: Best Practices for Exchange Server 2007**

This white paper discusses best practices to assist you with some of the challenges that come with an Exchange migration.

[▶ Get the White Paper](#)



### **Exchange 2007**

Quest's expertise in migration and management combined with Exchange Server 2007 ensure a stable, secure and manageable e-mail platform.

[▶ More about Exchange 2007](#)

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