

Why Reducing File Size Should Be a Top Priority in Your Organization

An Osterman Research Position Paper

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Storage Growth is a Critical Problem

Storage, among the more critical issues facing IT departments, is the foundational layer for virtually all business applications in the enterprise – email systems, desktop productivity applications, databases, various types of backend applications and other systems. Storage is becoming increasingly problematic and costly, in large part because storage requirements are growing at such a rapid pace. For example, a survey conducted by Osterman Research in February 2008 found that email-related storage is growing at 30% per year because of increasing use of email, greater use of attachments, larger attachments, etc. This means that a terabyte of storage today will swell to 2.2 terabytes in just three years. In fact, numerous Osterman Research surveys of messaging decision makers over the past two-plus years have shown that growth in messaging storage is the leading problem in managing email systems – worse than spam, malware and a host of other serious issues. Three out of five messaging decision makers considers growth in messaging storage to be a serious or very serious problem.

LARGE FILES CREATE NUMEROUS PROBLEMS

Growth in storage is problematic on a number of levels:

- While storage costs are generally declining over time, enterprise-grade storage is still expensive to procure: on the order of \$6 to \$14 per gigabyte or more depending on whether RAID 0+1, RAID 5 or less capable storage is employed.
- The cost of labor to evaluate, deploy and manage storage systems is expensive and becoming more costly over time – up to eight times the storage cost in some cases.
- More storage means greater difficulty in finding content as storage systems proliferate across the enterprise, not to mention increased power requirements and the additional floor space required to house these systems.
- In order to maintain acceptable email server performance in the face of growing storage requirements, about 60% of mid-sized and large organizations impose mailbox size quotas on their email users. Quotas are particularly problematic because end users typically spend 30 to 60 minutes per week managing their mailboxes – deleting data, creating personal archives, storing content on file servers, etc. – in order to stay under their quota limit. As file sizes grow over time, this activity will become more frequent or quota limits will need to increase.
- Most organizations impose limits on the size of files that can be sent through email. For example, an Osterman Research survey conducted in August 2008 found that 91%

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of organizations impose limits on the size of files that can be sent through email.

- Sending and receiving large files through email strains network bandwidth, requiring organizations to periodically add bandwidth or suffer from poor network performance.

REDUCING STORAGE REQUIREMENTS IS KEY

If we very conservatively assume that the typical user generates and processes only five megabytes of file content each workday, an organization of 1,000 users will generate 2.5 terabytes of content each year. However, because files are sent to multiple users, received from external sources, and multiple copies of files are often saved in various locations, that organization will typically store at least several tens of terabytes of content each year.

The key, then, is to reduce the amount of storage required across the enterprise without imposing additional burdens on IT staff, end users and the overall IT infrastructure, and without hampering the productivity of end users.

The most effective place to start for virtually all enterprises is with the content created by users in their desktop productivity applications, since this is the primary source of content sent through email systems. Because Microsoft® Office applications – Microsoft® Word, Microsoft® Excel® and Microsoft® PowerPoint® – are used by more than 90% of computer users, and because the size of these files causes users to regularly exceed email size limits, reducing the storage required by Microsoft® Office files is the logical place to start. For example, the August 2008 survey cited above found that Microsoft® PowerPoint® files regularly exceed email size limits in 59% of organizations, second only to graphics files. Microsoft® Excel® spreadsheets regularly exceed email size limits in 31% of organizations.

Further, 20% of organizations reported that emails with attachments are frequently too large to be sent, while another 44% of organizations report that email limits are occasionally exceeded. When email size limits are exceeded, there are a variety of negative consequences that can ensue, including:

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- Emails are bounced back to the sender (this occurs in 73% of organizations surveyed)
- Users employ FTP tools (51%)
- Users employ personal Webmail systems (19%)
- Users print attachments and send them physically (14%)

Further, some users will burn CD-ROMs with large files and send them via courier services. For example, one company needed to send a large presentation to individuals in

each of 450 locations. They paid an agency to create a CD-ROM, duplicate 450 copies of it and then distribute the copies to the 450 international locations.

The result is that emails do not get delivered in a timely way (or at all in some cases), costs are driven up and security is compromised.

About NXPowerLite™

NXPowerLite™ file optimization software dramatically reduces the size of Microsoft® Office files. Independent testing has shown an average reduction of Word files by 84%, Excel® files by 76% and PowerPoint® files by 88%¹.

NXPowerLite™ Desktop Edition integrates with your email client to automatically optimize Word, Excel® and PowerPoint® email attachments as they are being sent. Attachments compressed with NXPowerLite™ remain in their original format, there's no unzipping required and recipients do not need a copy of NXPowerLite™ to read the file.

Company-wide deployment of NXPowerLite™ will drastically lighten the overall load on your corporate network. It cuts email data growth, improves email server performance, lowers bandwidth usage and, most importantly, lowers costs for storage and IT staff time.

Reducing the size of [Office] files can significantly reduce storage requirements, bandwidth requirements and problems caused by quotas.

USED BY ORGANIZATIONS WORLDWIDE

NXPowerLite™ is used by more than 500,000 people in a variety of organizations, including Manulife Financial, L'Oreal, Hewlett Packard, Coca-Cola, Ben & Jerry's, NATO, NASA, 3M, Johnson & Johnson, Honda, Avon and the United States Army, Navy and Air Force.

Source: NXPowerLite™ Trident Warrior Experimentation and Results, FORCEnet

Summary

Storage growth is a serious problem for organizations of all sizes and the leading problem for decision makers who must manage email systems. Because Microsoft® Office files represent the bulk of files generated by users in most organizations, reducing the size of these files can significantly reduce storage requirements, bandwidth requirements and problems caused by quotas.

NXPowerLite™ can dramatically reduce file sizes, resulting in significantly reduced storage requirements, lower impositions on bandwidth and lower costs.

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