



MONARCH GROUP

MANAGING BALLOONING EXCHANGE FILES

Monarch Group adopts Iron Mountain NearPoint™ to deal with runaway email storage and resilience issues

CHALLENGE:

Rapid email expansion had seen a fivefold increase in storage file sizes with consequent instability and backup problems

SOLUTION:

Iron Mountain NearPoint with Disaster Recovery, PST Archiving, and Call Home management options

VALUE:

Stable and secure Exchange environment running on less hardware, offering full backup with reduced risk and assured compliance

“NearPoint allows us to move forward with an Exchange environment that we can easily manage and is fully protected.”

Ian Radford
IT Network and Information
Services Manager
Monarch Group

CLIENT

Monarch Group is a major UK provider of low-cost scheduled flights, and a key supplier of aircraft to the tour operating industry. With over 3,000 highly trained people, the company also offers engineering and technical facilities. In business since 1967, Monarch is the longest established UK airline still trading under its original name.

CHALLENGE

In just over two years, the number of emails received daily in Monarch Group had tripled, and email store sizes had increased by over 500 per cent. Exchange servers were in danger of running out of space and, because the databases were so big, they were becoming unstable with increasing risk of failure.

Ian Radford, IT Network and Information Services Manager at Monarch Group, explains: “As well as negatively impacting Exchange performance, their size also affected resilience. Full backups could not complete before the next working day began, meaning we were unable to

protect our Exchange environment effectively. If a server should fail, it would take up to 36 hours to restore a full Exchange service.”

Another major issue was the hundreds of large individual email storage files scattered around the organisation. Known as personal storage table (PST) files they were excluded from the backup schedule, leaving them unprotected. “PSTs were the only method we had for archiving emails, but they’re far from ideal,” Ian continues.

Monarch investigated options for keeping the current Exchange environment running, including extra servers or increased disk capacity in existing servers. However, the cost of enhancing the backup system to handle the additional data would have been prohibitive and it would only have put off the problem by around a year. Monarch concluded that it needed a high availability email archiving solution to reduce store sizes and get back to a secure and stable Exchange environment.

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SOLUTION

Monarch considered all the main providers. The shortlist came down to two, which were evaluated against test copies of the Monarch Exchange database. Based on this trial and the strength of its customer references, Iron Mountain NearPoint was chosen.

Ease of deployment – with no agent software to deploy on desktops – and ease of management were also major factors in the decision. The ease of use of NearPoint also extends to its disaster recovery capability. Some solutions would have needed Monarch to source and build extra hardware.



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In contrast, the NearPoint Disaster Recovery option simply integrates into the base product.

With the Iron Mountain NearPoint solution, Monarch was able to replace six Exchange servers with just two on separate sites. There is also a NearPoint server at each site and log traffic is replicated between the two. This means Monarch can reconstruct the Exchange database from the archive at either site in a matter of hours.

Prior to deploying the NearPoint solution, completion times for daily backups regularly exceeded the backup window. The NearPoint next generation architecture uses transaction log shipping. This maintains a replica of the Exchange Server database on the NearPoint server. Transaction logs keep it current. “Rather than perform full Exchange database backups, we just have to backup the NearPoint server and databases,” confirms Ian Radford.

Transactions can be rolled back to recover Exchange stores, mailboxes, or individual messages. Furthermore, the NearPoint Call Home management system constantly monitors the archive. It automatically sends an alert to the Monarch support team if it sees potential system issues. This allows problems to be proactively resolved before end users are impacted.

VALUE

Monarch holds personal information about passengers and is subject therefore to the Data Protection Act. The Act grants individuals the right to access a copy of the information comprised in their personal data.

On receipt of such a request, an organisation must produce the requested data within 20 days.

The difficulty in trying to find relevant emails and communications from historic backups can be immense. However, NearPoint advanced search capabilities make searching the archive quick and easy. The NearPoint PST Archiving Option also enables Monarch to locate and import existing PST files for complete control and search capabilities.

Ian Radford again: “We expect that there will be more regulations coming in, not less. The fact that we are ready for current and pending legislation is an added bonus. With NearPoint we know we can satisfy any future regulatory and corporate governance requirements placed on our email environment.”

NearPoint has enabled Monarch to achieve its goals of getting runaway email storage back under control, while reducing email store sizes and providing a resilient disaster recovery.

Users can manage their own archived emails, which simply appear as items in an Outlook folder, giving them access to all their emails and attachments, even when off line, and removing the administrative burden from the IT department.

Ian Radford sums up: “As well as giving our end user customers virtually unlimited mailbox storage and easy access to all their emails, NearPoint allows us to move forward with an Exchange environment that we can easily manage and is fully protected.”

Iron Mountain operates in major markets worldwide, serving thousands of customers throughout the UK, Europe, US, Canada, Asia Pacific and Latin America. For more information, visit our website at www.ironmountain.co.uk or at www.ironmountain.ie

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