

Proven Practice: Symantec eVault

Introduction

This document explains the steps taken to successfully do a completely new and fresh implementation of Symantec's eVault email archiving solution in a virtual environment. Our implementation was step number 2 towards moving from Exchange 2003 to 2007. This implementation allowed us to greatly reduce the size of our mailbox stores to enable the quarterly Exchange database maintenance to be completed in a manageable amount of time. This also positioned us to turn on journaling to allow the hospital to better respond to eDiscovery requests from attorneys.

Intended Audience

VI administrators, Exchange administrators, and SAN administrators may find this document useful when considering deploying an email archiving solution in a virtualized environment.

Outline

The topics covered in this paper are written for the technical personnel that will be performing the planning, implementing, and subsequent management of an email archiving solution.

Planning

- Determine LUN sizes required
- size of mail stores
- anticipated growth
- number of Exchange servers
- number of EV servers

Implementation

- Creation of VM servers
- Installation of Symantec software
- Software configuration
- Client deployment

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Planning

With our Exchange 2003 email stores being as large as they were (over 200GB across 1600 mailboxes) we tried to stay close to what we found as best practice and used a similar sized LUN for the eVault stores. With 3 Exchange servers in production it was suggested that three eVault application servers for both load balancing and redundancy for failure. With three eVault application servers we were required to have 3 200GB LUN's. The better than average data de-duplication of eVault allowed use to use a smaller LUN considering the amount of email we were going to archive. Those sized LUN's also allowed us to have future growth as well.

Implementation

For the server deployment, we went ahead and followed our plan, outlined above, of using three application servers and a SQL server. The servers were configured in our Virtual Infrastructure with Windows 2003 SP2 for the OS and the database is SQL 2005 SP2. The VM configurations were as follows:

Applications Servers

Dual CPU

3 GB RAM

15GB OS partition

200GB partition for Vault Stores (RDM)

20GB for EV temp space (RDM)

50GB for Vault Indexes (RDM)

SQL Server

Dual CPU

3GB RAM

15GB OS partition

50GB partition for SQL install (RDM)

50GB partition for db backups (RDM)

20GB partition for SQL logs (RDM)

We choose, essentially, all defaults for the application install and configuration. We did, however, start with archiving emails that were older than 12 months for a relatively small pilot group of about 20 mailboxes. Because of the immense amount of email, eVault would only archive a maximum of 3000 emails per mailbox per night. We scheduled the archiving to occur after hours when the load on the Exchange system was at its lowest.

We are currently archiving everything older than 12 months, and may implement mailbox size based archiving as well (ie keep all Exchange databases at 1G and archive anything over that). All email sent in, out or through our environment is also captured in EV via Journaling for eDiscovery purposes. PST and file shares are also archived using the file archiving features in EV.

We have since rolled the application out to the majority of the users. We have run into one small issue with authentication. For each user that wishes to have access to their archived email, there needs to be the eVault client installed on the PC they are using. Depending on how the permissions are configured for your enterprise, you may need to adjust them on the local PC to allow the install to happen automatically without asking for administrative permissions.

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We have been running in production mode for approximately 3 months now, and from a VM and storage perspective we have not run across any issues with performance.