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Aveng builds a stronger business by reducing complexity and moving it into the cloud

South African construction giant turns to "Software-as-a-Service" email management experts Mimecast to take care of its email archiving and hygiene as it moves away from in-house development of non-core technology systems.

Context

Aveng is one of South Africa's largest construction and steel manufacturing groups, with an extensive communications network connecting thousands of professionals with clients and partners. The company runs Novell's GroupWise collaboration suite and has high mail volumes: in the construction side of the business alone, over 50,000 emails are exchanged every day.

Solution

The Mimecast project had three specific objectives: to control email going into and out of the company; to comply with governance regulations; and to enable standardised stationery and marketing/compliance messages (headers and footers).

The Aveng implementation involved integrating Mimecast with the Novell NetWare environment. Mimecast's core infrastructure is based on its own carrier-class technology platform, which in turn is based on open industry standards and with powerful web-based interfaces. Users see no change to how they access email, as messages are passed from the Mimecast servers (which do scanning and archival) to Aveng's GroupWise servers and then on to the clients. Users access the mail archives through the Web console, which provides virtually instant response times on searches.

Benefits

The implementation has so far been very successful, and Aveng is preparing for the next rollout phases. "In the beginning we had some bandwidth limitations and speed

THE AVENG GROUP

AT A GLANCE:

Company

- Aveng Group (www.aveng.co.za)
- Industry: Construction and Steel Manufacturing
- Number of Email Users: 4000

Objectives

- Email archiving that operates seamlessly with existing infrastructure
- Meeting legislative and governance requirements
- Effective retrieval in support of investigations or dispute resolution

Benefits

- Compliance with governance regulations
- Reduced local data storage
- Ease and speed of message extraction
- Standardized stationery and marketing/ compliance messages
- Predictability of long-term costs

issues on our leased lines, but the Mimecast technical people worked on it, and it's been resolved – it's now working like a bomb," says Koninis.

A significant advantage to Aveng of hosting its mail through Mimecast is reducing local data storage – email correspondents often send large CAD file attachments, which instead of being replicated to every recipient, are now stored as single attachments in Mimecast's "bottomless" data centers, and not transferred to users until needed.

The most telling success for Aveng has been in message extraction when there are investigations or disputes. "It's so easy to extract the data. It's so quick. It doesn't sit for three or four days." This is a major business advantage, because construction projects require large numbers of people from many organisations to work in concert, and being able to quickly resolve disagreements or queries as to who committed to what ensures no frustrating holdups.

Aveng was using Novell's Border Manager to reduce spam and malware. This has now been largely superceded by Mimecast's data hygiene, with the intention of reducing dependence on Border Manager to zero as the new system is fine-tuned.

"I feel very positive about the Mimecast environment," Koninis concludes. "The support team is very good – they know exactly what they're doing."

For Aveng the future is clear – let experts take care of non-core technology services, especially when shared infrastructure and software as a service allow enormous economies of scale. The Mimecast solution solves Aveng's immediate business needs, and gives it clear visibility and predictability on the long-term costs of managing its email.

Challenge

The Aveng Group's Chief Information Officer, John Koninis, was staring down the barrel of an IT strategy nightmare: what to do with the mounting stores of email that needed to be managed, monitored and archived.

Koninis knew three things: Aveng's core business was not setting up data centers to archive email; any email solution needed to be rock-solid for availability and compliance; and it would need to

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operate seamlessly with the GroupWise environment that the users were familiar with.

"We never had true archiving before. What has happened with new legislation and governance requirements is that archiving is essential, but it is clear that you must also be able to execute effectively on retrieval," says Koninis. While Aveng was storing mail as required by good business practice, retrieval was not up to scratch: "It could take two or three days," he says. It was exceptionally labour intensive, and the system the company was using did not integrate with Groupwise at all, requiring IT staff to intervene whenever there was a need to extract mail.

Koninis explains that it had become increasingly clear that the group needed a more comprehensive solution for email, but the only option he was interested in was to look for an outsourcing partner – doing it in-house was never a workable option. "We knew from the beginning that email growth was going to extend to a position where it was uncontrollable for us," he says, and so the group preferred to look for outside experts. "If you believe you're an expert in everything, you have a problem," Koninis comments dryly.

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Mimecast makes business email and data safer for thousands of customers and millions of employees worldwide. Founded in 2003, the Company's next-generation cloud-based security, archiving and continuity services protect email and deliver comprehensive email risk management.

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