



Leveraging Mail Systems for Secure, Large, File Transfer

Email has become the media superpower. In 2007, 97 billion¹ emails were sent – every day – from offices and homes across the world. And with indicators suggesting that this trend will continue, email growth looks set to rise and to accelerate.

Yet it is not so much the volume of emails that poses problems for IT managers. Rather, it is the sizes of the documents attached to them along with the traceability and secure delivery that presents a significant challenge. With server limits imposed on most business users and many domestic users, large-sized files are filtered by the server and returned to sender (73% of organisations report email bounce back for this reason²). IT managers are forced to adopt extreme measures to ensure that material reaches its destination. Osterman³ shows commercial users overcoming such restrictions by by-passing their company's information security infrastructure in highly-concerning ways: using FTP or even personal email to avoid corporate limits, or printing and mailing data in paper form. But if the corporate email system is not up to the job, how are users to transfer their emails and attachments securely?

This was the dilemma facing Andrew Denley, Information Security and Risk Manager at the Pensions Regulator, a Regulatory Body belonging to the information secure network, and whose data transfers are often legally, financially or personally sensitive. As such, the IT department and data transfer system is subject to some of the tightest security scrutiny and control. The Pensions Regulator's IT team is dynamic and resourceful – it is the 2008 winner of Computer Magazine's IT Department of the Year award. Denley recognised the need for secure two-way transport of email attachments (encrypted or unencrypted) for use both within and without the information secure network. In scouring the external market he was both surprised and alarmed by how little was available.

Chaperon was one of a very few companies addressing this very real problem. With a history of secure software development, they had created Secure Attachment, a plug-in product for Microsoft Outlook users in precisely the scenario Denley had identified at the Pensions Regulator.

In essence, Secure Attachment separates the attachment at the point of sending and routes it through a Chaperon secure repository, which can be located either on the sender's server or externally. The recipient then downloads the

¹ Forbes.com, 'How to handle email deluge', 14 June 2008

² Osterman Research Paper, October 2008

³ Osterman Research Paper, October 2008



attachment from the repository using a personal password. This process is traced and time-stamped and the sender is advised once the download has taken place. For time-sensitive documents, time limits can be applied to the 'resting' time of an attachment in the repository, thus reducing the risk of stale information being used erroneously.

The separation allows all existing security measures to act in tandem with the application but removes the restriction on attachment file size. Security and traceability are actually enhanced as these are protected and guaranteed at each stage. For example, any attempt by a recipient to forward a Secure Attachment will automatically render the attachment inaccessible. This level of security exceeds most organisations' internal standards for file security, but for organisations such as the Pensions Regulator, where active policing of IT accounts is required, Chaperon's additional Inspection Station provides real-time visibility into the repository to confirm that security policies are indeed still in place and being supported.

The implementation at The Pensions Regulator has been a positive outcome for Chaperon in demonstrating the ability to provide highly cost-effective, secure large file transfer capability without incremental hardware expansion. David Hacker (Chaperon Europe General Manager) has worked with Andrew throughout the project. The challenge of requiring a return path capability has led to the development of the application outside of the Microsoft Outlook environment. The web-mail based solution provides a parallel solution for a dispersed workforce or external consultants who may not have access to the main mail servers.

For Andrew Denley and for the Pensions Regulator, the Chaperon system has been a valuable discovery. For Denley, control of transfer means control of risk. The Pensions Regulator's internal and external users can send and receive their email attachments swiftly, securely and – most importantly for users – with ease. They have no need to seek an alternative to the secure IT infrastructure provided and therefore stay within it. And, indeed, it should be most reassuring to those millions of us with pensions protected by the Pensions Regulator, to know that our information is being so well-Chaperoned.

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For additional information on Chaperon Secure Attachment, please contact us at info@Chaperon-Secure.com

