

Archiving vs. Backing Up



Many organizations confuse email backup with email archiving. Simply put, backups are for disaster recovery, while archives are for retention and discovery.

Today, business owners typically use backup technology for two distinct purposes:

1. To help recover from an emergency—either from a disaster, system error or user error
2. To comply with legal, compliance or general corporate regulations/policies.

But since backups are generally kept for just a set number of weeks, they really only serve as a short-term insurance policy to facilitate disaster recovery (assuming they are kept offsite). Although many businesses also use them to meet various compliance needs, they are not ideally suited to the task. Backups are often overwritten, and the information is generally not indexed, so when it comes to meeting regulatory compliance requirements or responding to e-Discovery requests, they tend to fall short when you need them most.

Archiving, on the other hand, is specifically designed to quickly and easily meet regulatory requirements and other compliance needs. In addition, archiving serves another important role – it reduces the strain on your email servers. Most organizations just store more and more email on their in-house Exchange servers, and consequently, their backup windows are increasing and storage costs are skyrocketing. Since archiving reduces the size of email stores, IT administrators can effectively reduce their backup windows as well as the budget strain continually adding storage tends to cause.

The table below demonstrates how email archiving goes beyond simple backups in terms of mailbox management, compliance and legal discovery.

PRIMARY PURPOSE	BACKUP (Disaster Recovery)	ARCHIVING (Retention & Discovery)
Archive		
Offload message store to reduce backup window	No	Yes
Single-instance storage	No	Yes
Eliminate the need for PST files	No	Yes
Comply		
Automatically retain every email and attachment	No	Yes
Tamper-proof storage	No	Yes
Prevent data corruption	No	Yes
Discover		
Index full text for fast identification	No	Yes
Granular legal hold of individual items	No	Yes
Rapid, low-cost discovery and retrieval	No	Yes

Redundant Email Storage

With traditional backup methods, the burden on email servers is often magnified because duplicate emails and attachments are being stored on the same server multiple times.

Here's an example of how this can happen:

- **Attachment multiplication**

Imagine you send a 1MB PowerPoint presentation to 10 coworkers. Now there is 10MB of duplicated data sitting on your email servers.

- **Bloated backups**

If all 10 of those coworkers download the attachment, create a PST file or forward the original message to other recipients within your organization, duplicate files can multiply quickly. What started out as a single 1MB file can end up taking 100MB of storage space (or more), because it resides in several places on your file server and gets backed up daily.

- **Slow, inefficient backups**

Instead of backing up a single 1MB file, your IT department has to backup considerably more data. This takes more time and money—the more data there is to backup, the more storage space (tape) is required. Ultimately, backup bloat demands more expensive backup devices.

- **Broken backup windows**

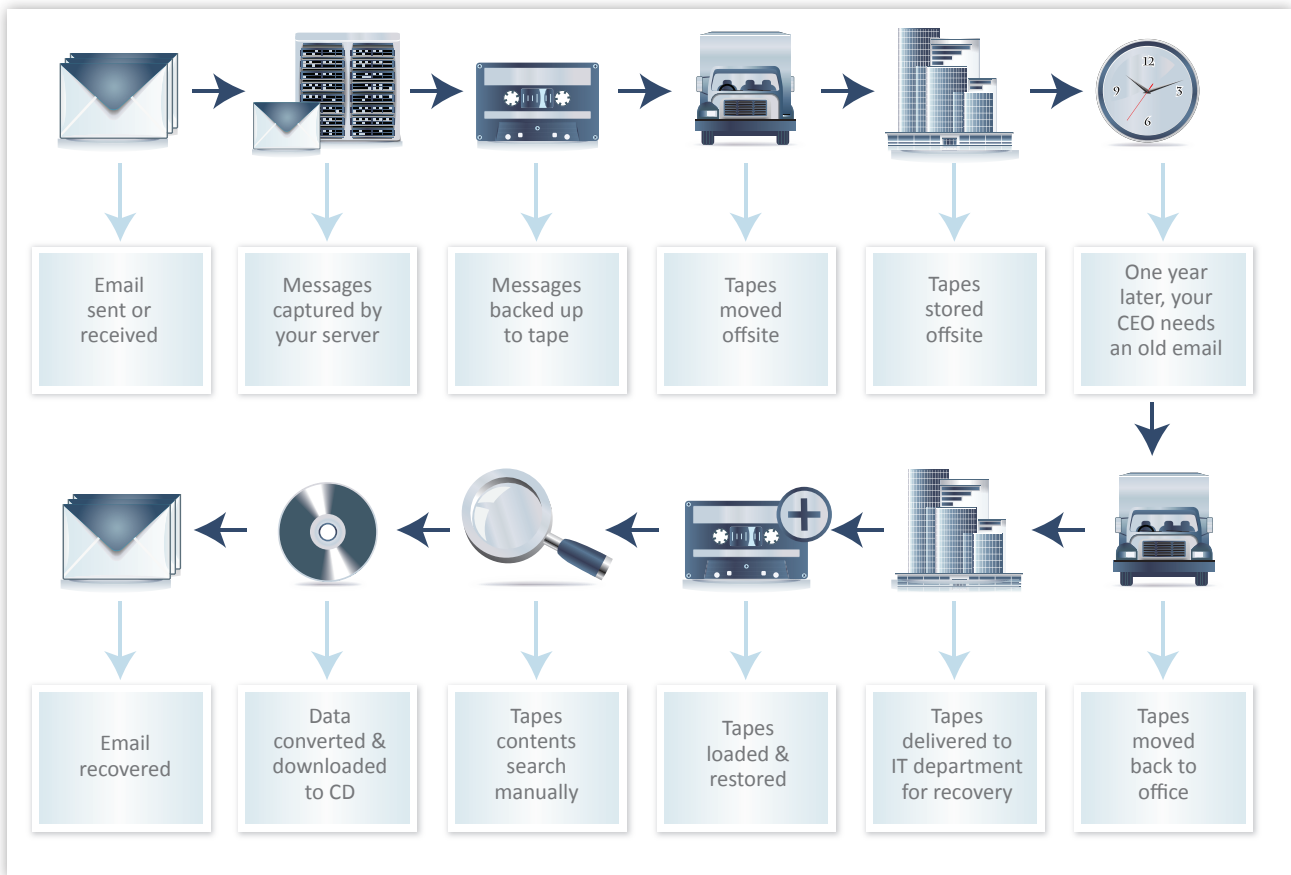
Most companies backup overnight, but if backup volumes grow too big, you run the risk of not being done before you open for business the following day. Such overruns can slow down normal IT operations during the work day, which can negatively affect your overall productivity. Round-the-clock or global operations make it even more important to complete backups quickly.

With archiving solutions, single-instance storage ensures that only one copy of the original email and attachment are held within the database, which eliminates data duplication and increases server efficiency.

Speed of Recovery

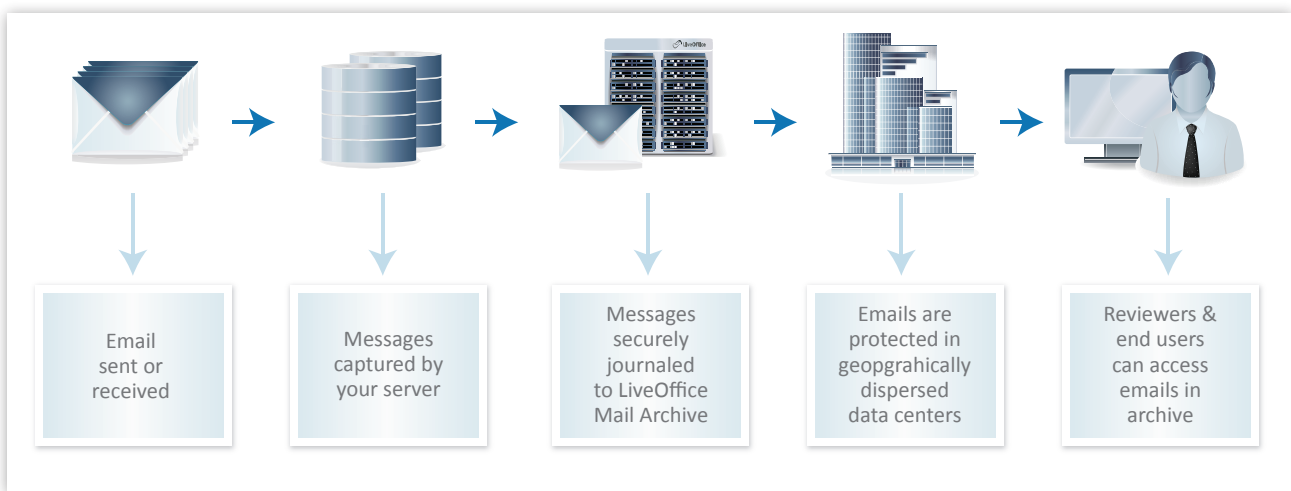
Another challenge with backups is the ability to quickly recover specific emails (especially when research suggests that as many as 50% of remote backups fail). This becomes critical in litigation, when your organization needs to produce specific emails related to a particular case in a limited amount of time.

Compare the normal process of restoring a message from a backup file with the process of hosted email archiving:



While backups are effective for short-term disaster recovery, they often take too long to restore when you must quickly respond to an audit or legal discovery request.

VS.



Archiving expedites the process of finding specific data whenever you need it.

For most modern organizations, the operational, legal and compliance challenges of email necessitate going beyond simple backups. Call us today, and we can help you better understand the risks of backups and the immediate benefits of hosted email archiving.