

Deacons

Reducing Storage Costs by 40 Percent with Symantec Solutions



To support its aims of ensuring that email records can be retained long term, and providing faster, more efficient e-Discovery, Hong-Kong-based law firm Deacons selected archiving and retention management tools from Symantec. Results include five man-hours per week saved in email administration time, 70 percent less data residing on tier-one storage, a 40 percent reduction in total storage costs, better mail server performance by reducing mailbox sizes, and 50 percent faster e-Discovery. Deacons is also using endpoint security, endpoint management, and backup and recovery solutions from Symantec to protect its network and data in the most efficient manner possible.

ORGANIZATION PROFILE

Deacons (<http://www.deacons.com.hk>) is a business law firm based in Hong Kong with representative offices in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. Of the company's 600 employees, 550 are located in Hong Kong. In business for over 155 years, Deacons is the oldest and largest independent law firm in Hong Kong.

INDUSTRY

Legal

SOLUTION

Archiving, Backup and Recovery, Data Loss Prevention, Discovery and Retention Management, Endpoint Management, Endpoint Security, Messaging Management

Bridging Two Worlds

Ever since the territory was ceded to Great Britain after the Opium Wars in the mid-1800s, Hong Kong has been a unique point of contact between Mainland China and the Western world. Although Hong Kong continues to follow the common law tradition established by British colonial rule, it has a central role as a financial centre serving the whole of China.

Law firms such as Deacons, the oldest full-service law firm in Hong Kong, are adept at navigating the legal frameworks of various Pacific Rim countries to allow clients to expand their businesses throughout the region. Founded in 1851, Deacons is the first law firm to be granted three licenses to operate representative offices in the People's Republic of China.

Email Retention Policy

Due to the sensitive nature of electronic communications in the legal field, as well as the need to locate correspondence and other information quickly and easily, Deacons needs to be able to retain email over the long term and retrieve it quickly and consistently if the need arises.

The retention policy's impact on Deacons' information systems and storage, however, was becoming a problem. Since the company does not allow users to create PST files in Microsoft Outlook, IT staff had to move overflow from users' mailboxes to public folders on the network—a time consuming, tedious job that took at least five hours per week.

“Our data is growing very fast, and our lawyers have no time for housekeeping tasks

“Enterprise Vault has allowed us to optimize our email storage and reduce our total cost of ownership.”

Cora Li

Infrastructure Manager
Deacons

Using Symantec Enterprise Vault, Deacons accelerated e-Discovery time by 50%.

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and managing email,” says Cora Li, infrastructure manager at Deacons. “Yet they may need to keep their email for a long time. Because our Microsoft Exchange email system imposes a two gigabyte quota limit, sometimes lawyers would be temporarily prohibited from sending email, which affected the business.”

In 2007, Deacons approached The ASL Group, one of the largest systems integrators in Hong Kong, for an archiving solution that would help it retain old email without the need to invest in expensive tier-one storage. Unicode support was an important consideration because of Deacons’ operations in China. ASL recommended Symantec Enterprise Vault™, and provided Li with an overview of the solution.

“We decided to implement Enterprise Vault for its archiving capabilities, so we could avoid buying more Exchange-based servers at a cost of approximately US \$6,500, and make better use of our primary storage,” says Li. “ASL provided us with valuable input before and during the implementation.” Symantec partner Asiasoft Hong Kong Ltd. handled the actual implementation.

Reducing Storage Costs by 40 Percent

With the intelligent archiving platform that Enterprise Vault provides, Li’s staff is now able to concentrate on higher-value tasks. It has also allowed Deacons to free up 70 percent of its primary storage, resulting in a 40 percent reduction in total storage costs.

Reducing the online message store in this manner also has direct implications for disaster recovery, Li observes. “Less data on production servers means that our recovery time will be significantly reduced in the case of a disaster,” she says.

Performance has also improved. “By reducing the size of the mailboxes and public folders, we’re getting much better performance from Exchange,” says Li. “And because Enterprise Vault inherits mailbox security settings from Exchange, we can maintain the same level of security on archived messages.”

SOLUTION AT A GLANCE

Business Drivers

- Retain email indefinitely if necessary.
- Eliminate annoying mailbox quota warning messages to users
- Ensure that users can send and receive email at all times
- Reduce storage costs
- Increase speed for e-Discovery requests
- Protect network and endpoints against damage from viruses and malware
- Provide reliable data backup and recovery

Technology Challenges

- Support Unicode text in searchable email archive
- Improve email performance without purchasing additional servers
- Reduce manual processes associated with backup, recovery, and endpoint management

Solution

Endpoint, messaging, and retention management tools with backup and recovery solution

Symantec Products

- Symantec Enterprise Vault™ with
 - Microsoft Exchange Mailbox Archiving agent
 - Microsoft Exchange Journaling agent
- Symantec™ Multi-tier Protection with
 - Symantec AntiVirus™
 - Symantec Mail Security for SMTP
- Symantec Backup Exec™ with
 - Agent for Microsoft SQL Server
 - Symantec Ghost™ Solution Suite

Symantec Services

- Symantec Basic Maintenance Services

Symantec Partners

- Systems Integrator: The ASL Group (<http://hk.country.csc.com>)
- Value-Added Distributor: Asiasoft Hong Kong Ltd. (<http://www.asiasoft.com.hk>)

Technology Environment

- Applications: Microsoft Windows XP Professional, Microsoft Office 2003, Interwoven WorkSite, Elite Enterprise
- Databases: Microsoft SQL Server 2000, 2005
- Servers: 50 HP ProLiant servers running Microsoft Windows Server 2000, 2003
- Storage: NetApp FAS2020 storage array
- Tape drives: HP StorageWorks Ultrium

BUSINESS VALUE AND TECHNICAL BENEFITS

- 5 man-hours per week time savings in email administration
- 70% less impact on primary storage through email archiving
- 40% reduction in total storage costs
- 70% reduction in recovery time objective (RTO)
- Better mail server performance
- 50% faster e-Discovery
- No damage from viruses or malware since implementing Symantec AntiVirus
- 300 man hours saved per year in imaging, deploying, migrating, and managing systems

50 Percent Faster e-Discovery

Enterprise Vault is also helping Deacons respond to legal e-Discovery requests, which can involve complex searches over time spans of several years. “We used to have to restore a user’s mailbox from backup tapes or from Ultra Density Optical disk to search old email,” says Li. “Using Enterprise Vault, we can search the journal mailbox or any vault store in real time, using complex search criteria, and save the results in PST format. This reduces our e-Discovery time by approximately 50 percent.”

In January 2008, Deacons implemented the Microsoft Exchange Journaling agent for Enterprise Vault to ensure that copies of all email messages sent and received may be retained.

“Enterprise Vault has allowed us to optimize our email storage and reduce our total cost of ownership,” says Li. “More important, it enables us to locate and retrieve emails quickly, which is a crucial task for us. We can search on a single Chinese character if we need to.”

Endpoint Protection and Reliable Backups

Deacons is also using Symantec™ Multi-tier Protection with Symantec AntiVirus™ and Mail Security for SMTP to protect its endpoints against damage from viruses or malware. The company is currently evaluating Symantec Endpoint Protection, which offers additional protection against spyware and other threats. “Symantec’s antivirus products give us peace of mind, and ensure that our IT systems are always protected,” says Li.

To back up its critical enterprise data, Deacons uses Symantec Backup Exec™ software with the Agent for Microsoft SQL Server. “Using Symantec Backup Exec, I am confident that our data is safe and ready for use under any circumstances,” says Li.

Symantec Basic Maintenance Services offer additional peace of mind by providing knowledgeable support for Deacons’ Symantec products.

Managing 600 Workstations with Ease

The firm is also using Symantec Ghost™ Solution Suite to deploy new systems remotely, without traveling to the user’s location. “Symantec Ghost Solution Suite saves us a lot of time, and lets us manage more than 600 workstations easily,” says Li. “We can schedule image deployment to take place during non-work hours to reduce the interruptions to users. I can’t imagine if we needed to set up the systems by installing the operating system and applications one by one. It would be bizarre to have to go through all that again.” Li estimates the solution is saving Deacons at least 300 man hours per year.

A Solid Platform for the Future

Overall, Li is pleased with the business value Deacons is receiving from Symantec solutions, and she is happy to be making life easier for the firm’s lawyers and IT staff alike.

“Technology is always changing, like a rolling ball, and we have to make sure we are keeping up and providing the best solutions for the business,” she says. “Symantec products really help us a lot.”