

Nanyang Technological University

Increasing Knowledge at a Top University Is Easier With Bigger Email Quotas—Enabled by Symantec Solutions



With a world-class faculty generating increasing volumes of email to facilitate their work and research needs, Nanyang Technological University turned to SoftSource, a Symantec partner, and Symantec message management solutions. Results include the ability to support a nearly tenfold increase in user mailbox quotas while saving 3 TB in primary storage space.

A Critical Need

Few things in life are more certain than growing amounts of email.

Users in almost every organization are receiving more and more email messages and they usually want to keep most of them.

This is especially true at the top 100 universities in the world, and Singapore's Nanyang Technological University (NTU) is one of them.¹

The 2,300 faculty members at NTU have a mission: Grow and share knowledge. Email is a critical tool for them. So when their IT team in 2005 tried to manage growing storage costs by enforcing a 150-megabyte mailbox quota, it seemed like putting a limit on learning itself.

At least that's how it might have seemed to faculty members as they wrestled with choosing which email messages to delete—or which messages to store in hard-to-search and easily lost PST files.

A Better Way

"We needed to provide additional email storage for our users," says Srirengan Sundaresan, Senior Assistant Director, IT Operations. So he and Tan Teck Tim, NTU's Exchange Administrator, led an evaluation of email archiving solutions in 2005. They turned for help to SoftSource Solutions Pte Ltd (SoftSource), a Symantec partner also based in Singapore.

"We evaluated a number of solutions and decided to run proof of concept tests on Symantec Enterprise Vault and other products," Mr. Sundaresan says.

The team wanted a solution that would be transparent to users and easy to administer. It should support journaling (the ability to automatically copy and archive every incoming and outgoing message). And it should also be able to archive unstructured data such as files and Microsoft SharePoint documents.

ORGANIZATION PROFILE

Nanyang Technological University (NTU, www.ntu.edu.sg) was founded in Singapore in 1955 and currently has about 28,700 students and 2,300 faculty. It was named by the Times Higher Education-QS World University Rankings in 2008 as one of the top 100 universities in the world.

INDUSTRY

Education and Research

SOLUTION

Discovery & Retention Management
Data Loss Prevention
Messaging Management
Backup and Recovery

"Faculty and staff have always asked us for more and more email storage. With Symantec Enterprise Vault we are able to provide higher user mailbox storage"

Mr. Srirengan Sundaresan

Senior Assistant Director,
IT Operations
Nanyang Technological
University

Symantec Enterprise Vault has helped save 3 TB in primary storage space.

“NTU has an increasing number of users that are mobile and working from home or other sites outside our network,” Tan says. “So the solution also had to enable remote users to easily search email archives from the Web.”

The team made their choice in late 2005. “In the proof of concept test, Symantec Enterprise Vault met our requirements best,” Mr. Sundaresan explains. NTU deployed the solution by early 2006 for 5,000 seats.

Deployment went well. “We’ve had a good experience working with SoftSource in deployment,” Mr. Sundaresan remembers. “Their engineers were well trained and they know the product thoroughly. They took the time to understand our infrastructure and came up with a strong design. After a quick proof-of-concept, we had a smooth implementation.”

Mailbox Quotas Nearly Ten Times Bigger

The team gained the control they wanted over email storage. As Symantec Enterprise Vault archives messages, it removes messages from Microsoft Exchange servers and databases and compresses and deduplicates them. The result is often a reduction in email storage volume by as much as 40 percent.

The NTU team was therefore able to raise user email quotas from 150 megabytes in 2005 in stages. The quota in 2008 is now 1.6 gigabytes per user—an increase nine and a half times over.

“Our users are much happier and more productive,” Mr. Tan says. “Applications for larger email quotas have dropped by over 50 percent.”

Deployment has been transparent to users. “The faculty uses email just like before.” If a message is archived in Enterprise Vault, it still appears in the user’s Microsoft Outlook mailbox. “Users just double click on an archived message and it opens. They did not have to change how they use email.”

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Senior Assistant Director,
IT Operations
Nanyang Technological University

SOLUTION AT A GLANCE

Key Challenges

- Maximize email user productivity by increasing mailbox quotas
- Control growth in email storage
- Reduce costs by regaining primary disk space
- Enable planned enforcement of email retention policies

Solution

Software-based intelligent archiving platform for email, files, and Microsoft SharePoint documents

Symantec Products

- Symantec Enterprise Vault™
Options: File System Archiving, Microsoft Exchange Journaling, Microsoft SharePoint Portal Server Archiving
- Symantec NetBackup

Symantec Partner

- SoftSource Solutions Pte Ltd
(www.softsource.com.sg)

Technology Environment

- Applications: Microsoft Exchange Server 2003, Microsoft Outlook
- Email Server Platform: HP ProLiant servers running Microsoft Windows Server 2003
- Storage: HP StorageWorks Enterprise Virtual Array, HP StorageWorks 1000 Modular Smart Array

Business Results

- Nearly tenfold increase in mailbox quotas
- 3 TB saved in primary disk space
- Email archive searches enabled for remote users

Because Enterprise Vault indexes the full text of messages and attachments as it archives, specific information is easier to find. And Enterprise Vault's support for Microsoft Outlook Web Access means that NTU's remote users can search archived messages from outside the network, as required.

3 TB In Reclaimed Storage

NTU now has three terabytes of messages in its email archive. Symantec Enterprise Vault has enabled the IT team to move these messages from its expensive tier one storage to less costly tier two storage, providing a one-time storage cost avoidance of 38 percent.

To support deployment, instructors from SoftSource trained NTU administrators in Enterprise Vault and devised a training course for the university's users. "Faculty members are a demanding audience," Mr. Sundaresan notes, "and the SoftSource teachers taught them well." SoftSource also provides technical support for Enterprise Vault. "They're very responsive in their support," Mr. Sundaresan says.

Moving ahead, the NTU team is evaluating plans to use the journaling feature of Enterprise Vault as well as to begin to archive files and Microsoft SharePoint documents. The team also plans to set email retention policies and use Enterprise Vault's ability to administer policies centrally and enforce them on a granular level, by user class or department. "This will be a very useful feature for us," Mr. Tan says.

NTU is a member of the Enterprise Vault Strategic Customer Board in the Asia Pacific region and engaged with the Enterprise Vault Regional Product Management (RPM) team which allows them additional confidence that Enterprise Vault will continue to meet and exceed their needs moving forward.

The most important benefit is already in effect. The faculty has greater freedom to work without managing email quotas. "Faculty members have always asked us for more and more email storage," says Mr. Sundaresan. "And now, because of Symantec Enterprise Vault, we can give it to them."

¹ Times Higher Education-QS World University Rankings 2008