

Virtua Health Powers Its Digital Hospital with Mimosa NearPoint



Virtua Health

Marlton, New Jersey, USA

www.virtua.org

Virtua Health is a multi-hospital healthcare system headquartered in Marlton, NJ. A non-profit organization, Virtua employs 7,100 staff and credentials another 1,800 physicians. It has distinguished itself as an early adopter of clinical and digital technologies, striving to create a “paper light” digital hospital. Its staff and physicians rely heavily on email for communication. Virtua Health chose Mimosa™ NearPoint™ to solve multiple Microsoft® Exchange challenges including archiving, recovery, and storage management.



Archiving/Storage Management

eDiscovery

Recovery



Mimosa NearPoint Benefits

- Full email archiving capabilities
- Complete recovery capabilities
- Message and mailbox restore
- Disaster recovery protection

Background

Virtua Health is a progressive healthcare provider in South Jersey that competes with neighboring South Jersey Hospitals and the much larger university healthcare providers in the Philadelphia area. Using technology to improve service delivery in all areas is one of Virtua's key strategies to deliver world-class patient care and increase its market share. Email is the backbone of communications for the 8,900 staff members and physicians of Virtua Health, with electronic communications transmitted across four major hospitals and multiple smaller clinics and facilities. Staff productivity is enhanced with the deployment of laptops, tablets, and PDAs, all with wireless network access throughout the facilities. "Employees are very mobile and carry their tablets and laptops wherever they go and have constant access to email," explained Tom Pacek, AVP of Technology. "We do not use Instant Messaging; instead we rely heavily on email for daily communications. Employees use it to collaborate on documents as well as to send the smallest messages.

We also integrated our voice mail system with email, further driving the need for efficient email information management."

Business Situation

At Virtua, email is tied to every business process. "People can't live without email applications, just as much as they can't live without clinical apps anymore," explains Pacek. "Important system-wide communications are sent over email and it is the primary tool for communication and collaboration." By emphasizing personal communication using the latest mobile technology, Virtua has had to address challenges to keep users happy. Users routinely require assistance from the Help Desk to search for messages they have lost or to recover email deleted by mistake. "On multiple occasions, users tried unsuccessfully to synchronize email to their PDA and deleted their entire mailbox," said Andrew Gahm, Network Architect. "In these situations, we had to restore mailboxes—a process that took days



“The optimization of our email environment with Mimosa NearPoint helps Virtua Health enhance the quality of patient care, improve clinical safety, meet regulatory requirements, reduce costs, and enhance employee productivity”

— **Tom Pacek**, AVP of Technology, Virtua Health

to complete. “To limit the total Exchange storage, Virtua maintains stringent 80 MB mailbox quotas. “I know that users demand more mailbox capacity and today there exists hundreds of .PST files, many of which exceed 1 GB in size. We have a critical need to manage Exchange storage, including .PST files.”

The Mimosa NearPoint Solution

Virtua Health chose Mimosa NearPoint for Microsoft Exchange Server for its email archival and recovery capabilities. Virtua also recognized the benefits NearPoint provides in managing Exchange storage and, most importantly, how NearPoint Self-Service Access fit perfectly with Virtua’s strategy to improve user productivity.

Mimosa NearPoint provides a truly unique, next-generation capability for full capture of email, calendar items, contacts, etc. called “log shipping.” Unlike the Exchange Journaling capture method, log

Mimosa NearPoint delivers a unified information management solution for archiving, eDiscovery, recovery, data protection, and storage management.

shipping does not require a major re-architecture of the production email system. It was also the only solution that could meet the scalability requirements of Virtua’s 8,900 users environment. Mimosa NearPoint runs on a standard Windows 2003 server installed at the recovery data center. The Exchange log files that NearPoint reads continuously from the Exchange Server cluster have negligible impact on the 1 GB LAN. “The log shipping methods that NearPoint utilizes are so network efficient, I did not have to make any changes to my network,” stated Pacek.

NearPoint offers multiple levels of recovery capabilities, from message and mailbox restore to disaster recovery. With NearPoint, Help Desk requests to restore email are easy to fulfill, resulting in improved overall user productivity. The NearPoint Self-Service Access™ feature provides client access to the archive directly in Outlook. “I liked the fact that my users do not need to leave Outlook to access their archive mailbox,” said Pacek. “When users open Outlook, they can see the archive folder and quickly search and restore any email in their archive.” Mailboxes are restored from the archive just as easily as messages, with a simple click in the Administrator console.

In the event of a disaster, NearPoint maintains full copies of all the Exchange database files (.EDBs) on disk. With a simple “point-and-click,” the full .EDBs are quickly restored to Exchange. The NearPoint server is installed at a remote recovery site, twenty miles from the main data center. Having all critical email data protected off-site provides added insurance in case a disaster strikes the main data center.

ENVIRONMENT

- Exchange Server 2003
- 8,900 Mailboxes

“Simplicity was the key to using NearPoint for recovery. Ranging from a full database recovery to a mailbox restore, I found that NearPoint was very simple to use and the performance was impressive.”

— **Tom Pacek**

A high speed 1 GB LAN connection between the centers provides the network connectivity. The current Exchange environment is protected with nightly full tape backups that take approximately six hours to complete. “We tried brick-level backups one time; but it took so long to complete, we shut it off and never used it again,” said Pacek.

For storage management, the Mailbox Extension feature of NearPoint is used. Mailbox Extension uses simple rules based on age and size to move attachment files to the archive and replace them with small “stub files” in Exchange. “In test situations, I saw over 50% reductions in mailbox size by using NearPoint Mailbox Extension,” claimed Pacek. “Not only will this keep my users well below their mailbox quota limits, it also improves my Exchange backup times.” For managing existing .PST file data, the NearPoint PST Archive Option was used to manually archive .PST data directly into NearPoint. “I am extremely pleased that I can protect the existing .PST data and reduce the load on my network file shares. My users will be pleased to learn they can access and search all their .PST data within Outlook by using NearPoint.”

“Everything I loved about NearPoint showed up in the Outlook folder,” Pacek stated. “It is so easy to use.” The Virtua Help Desk handles over a thousand calls per day, many dealing with lost emails. “Every time NearPoint is used for self-service message restores it will not only save Help Desk time, but it will make for a happier user. Self-service is our key initiative as we roll out more laptops and tablets. The more self-service tools we can put into their hands, the more productive they can be. We are moving to create a completely digital hospital and we feel empowering users is a key factor in our overall success.”

NearPoint Delivers Real Benefit

“I researched other email archive solutions and determined that this is the best solution for us,” said Gahm. “The search capabilities of Mimosa NearPoint are phenomenal. NearPoint cannot only produce the content of a message, but it can tell me what folders it existed in. NearPoint also archives all message types including calendars, contacts, notes, tasks, and drafts. I have more confidence in my ability to support legal discovery knowing that NearPoint provides the complete content and context of all email data that I provide.”



ABOUT MIMOSA SYSTEMS

Mimosa Systems, Inc., delivers next-generation information management solutions with Mimosa™ NearPoint™, providing a live content archive for Microsoft® Exchange Server. NearPoint unifies archiving, eDiscovery, recovery, and storage management in a single solution, ensuring email continuity and regulatory compliance.



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