CHAPTER **1**   **EMAIL-ARCHIVING PROJECT ROADMAP**
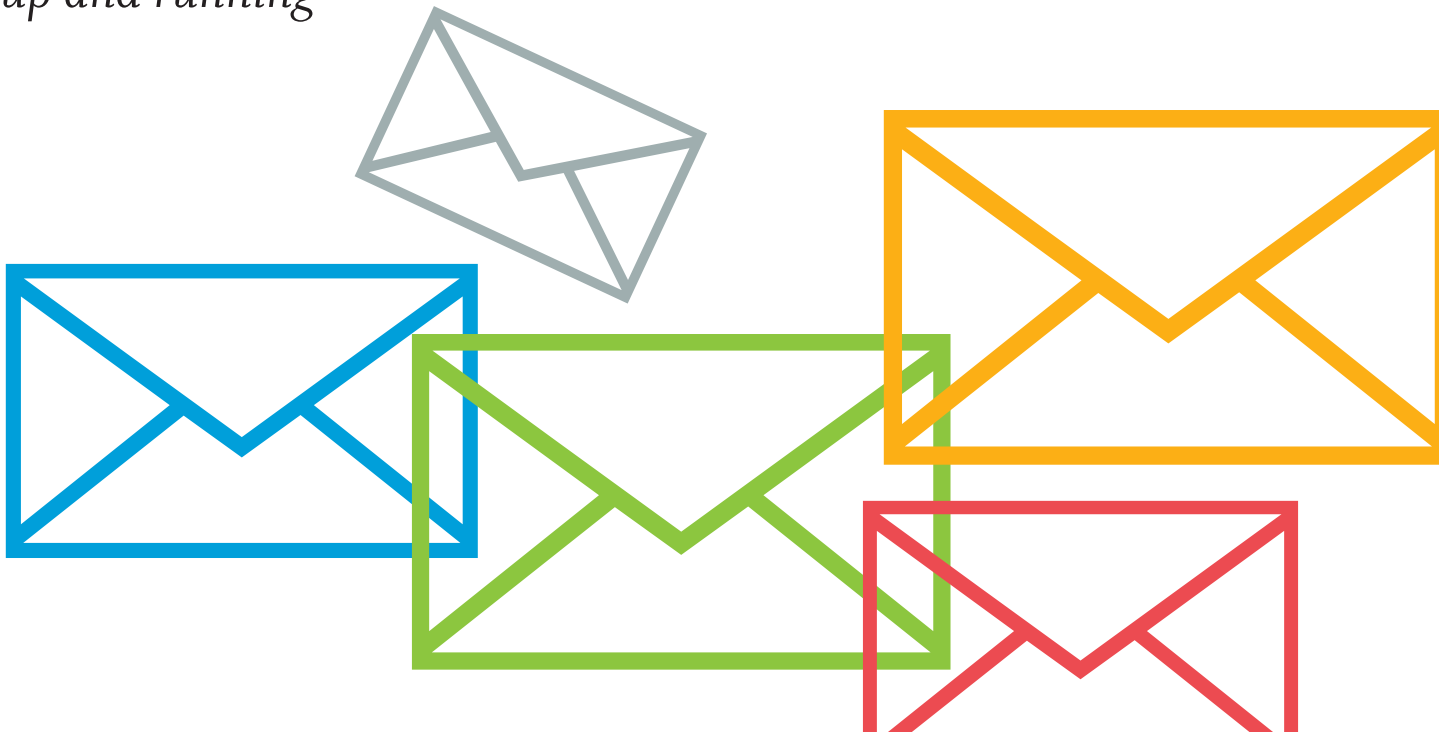
Email archiving: Planning, policies and product selection

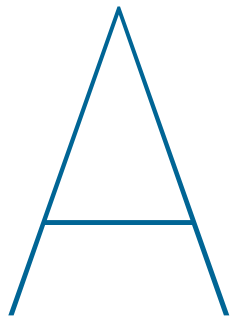*Ready to dive into email archiving? Try this four-phased approach to get your project up and running*

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Email-archiving project roadmap
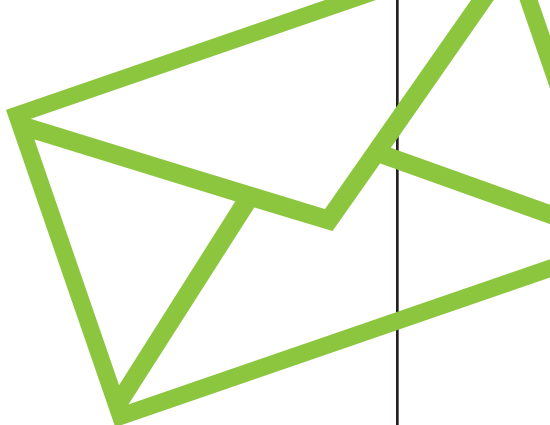
by Kathryn Hilton

AN AVALANCHE OF email has created a problem for IT shops. As more and more communication goes electronic, businesses face a growing volume of email to store, sort and eventually delete. At the same time, compliance with internal policies and external regulations has forced businesses to consider the ramifications of deleting email messages.

Email archiving is one way to handle the glut of electronic messages. IT managers can store messages in a cost-effective location and index them for easy retrieval without affecting user access to them. But before installing and using any new email-archiving product, companies should understand the consequences of using this kind of technology. When capabilities of products are understood, then practical email-archiving policies can be developed.

An email-archiving project, like any other IT project, requires a fully developed plan. This chapter will review the four phases required to plan and deploy a successful email archiving project:

① **Getting started**
② **Gathering requirements**
③ **Selecting a vendor and a product**
④ **Implementing and deploying the product**

In today's business environment, enterprises must understand where their records reside and be able to produce the relevant data quickly in the event of litigation or face stiff penalties.

Getting started | Gathering requirements | Selecting a vendor and a product | Implementing and deploying the product

PHASE 1: Getting started

IT PROJECTS OFTEN start with a product and end with an attempt to get buy-in from corporate users. A better approach is to start asking the right people the right questions right away to get buy-in much earlier in the process.

There are three key drivers for implementing an email-archiving project:

- cost of storage
- litigation readiness
- compliance with regulations

All three are closely connected, yet each appeals to a different segment of the business. Therefore, you need to include representatives from each segment in every step of the email-archiving implementation.

The first step is to form a steering committee for the project. The committee should include high-level stakeholders, including the IT department, the legal department and the records-management department. Keep this group active and focused. Make sure that everyone has enough time to dedicate to the project.

Call on other contributors as specific issues arise. The human resources department may have some input on issues such as data privacy. Other departments such as engineering or product development may also have unique requirements that need to be addressed. This might be the first time these people have met, so begin with a comprehensive explanation of the project goals.

Start the first meeting with a general discussion about email archiving and its value to the organization. Everyone should understand the goals and the need for getting the process right. These initial committee meetings should focus on the need for balance among efficiency, compliance and litigation readiness. Once the parties see that the current system does not work, they will likely be on board with a plan to develop a new email-archiving system.

For most organizations, semi-structured data and unstructured data represent the biggest challenges in terms of meeting e-discovery requirements. E-discovery is the process of searching, collecting, reviewing and producing all relevant electronic documents for litigation.

Getting started | Gathering requirements | Selecting a vendor and a product | Implementing and deploying the product

As **Figure 1** illustrates, many companies see semi-structured data — especially email — as the most immediate concern that they need to address to reduce the risks and costs of e-discovery. Unstructured data has historically been viewed as a huge storage problem in terms of cost. However, addressing files has become an increasingly important driver in litigation readiness. In today's business environment, enterprises must understand where their records reside and be able to produce the relevant data quickly in the event of litigation or face stiff penalties.

   IT shops will often complain about the time and cost spent managing email systems. Some IT departments use inflexible approaches like inbox quotas, which limit the amount of email the user can store on an email server to contain storage costs.
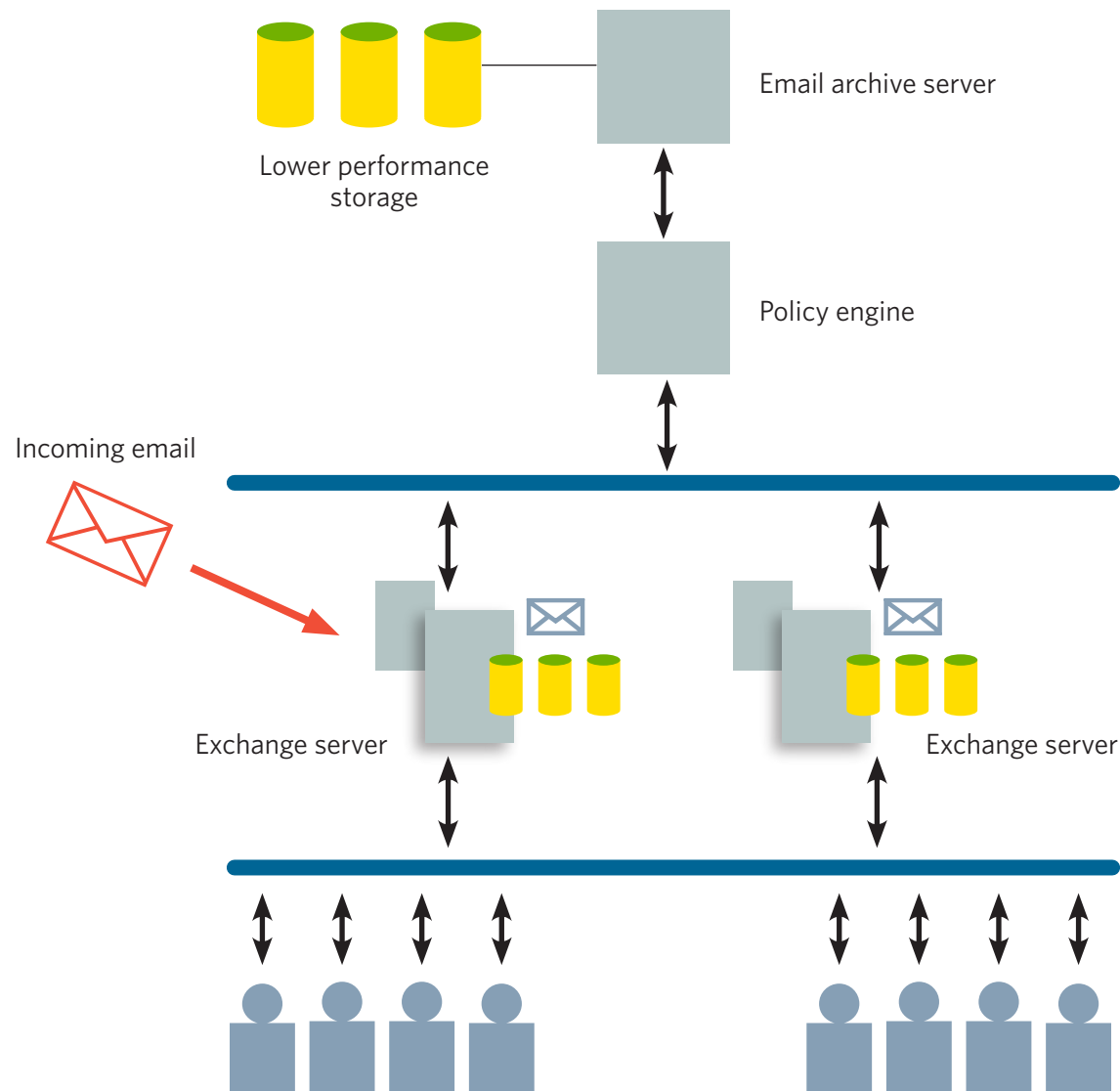

Lower performance storage

Email archive server

Policy engine

Incoming email

Exchange server

Exchange server

FIGURE 1: *Typical batch-processing solution to email archiving*
(Source: Contoural Inc.)

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This approach puts users in "email jail," creating a situation in which they are unable to receive new email because their mailboxes are full.

Quotas often force users to go underground, moving messages offline into files like the Microsoft Outlook PST format or into other removable media. Once users take email with them, then it is no longer backed up, and it cannot be deleted or efficiently searched and retrieved as policy changes.

Cost is another driver for email recovery. Recovering email from an old tape-based backup system can cost millions of dollars to scan, index and import messages into outdated software.

As for litigation readiness, whoever holds the data bears this cost. This means that a company can pay out millions of dollars to recover email for

DATA TYPES	Compliance, discovery	Application performance	Storage cost
Semi structured *Email, check imaging*	+++	+	++
Structured *Databases, ERP, CRM*	+	+++	++
Unstructured *Office docs, audio files*	++	+	+++

FIGURE 2: *Business drivers for data management*
(Source: Contoural Inc.)

a case in which email is only peripherally involved.

The time to review, update or create a corporate policy for email retention is before litigation is even an issue. Questions that need to be addressed include: When should a message be moved from its inbox to longer term and more structured storage? And when, if ever, should the company delete email messages?

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PHASE 2: Gathering requirements

FOR COMPANIES CONSIDERING dedicated email archiving, there are two main alternatives: 1) in-house and 2) hosted or outsourced. The in-house alternative uses internal resources and IT infrastructure to process and store archived email messages. Most providers favor this category.

Hosted solutions provide another option for companies with limited IT budgets and personnel, as well as companies wanting to avoid investing a lot of up-front money in a system.

Email and file-system archive vendors have different perspectives on positioning. Top market leaders in email archiving include Symantec, EMC Corp., CA Inc., Zantaz, IBM, OpenText Corp., AXS-One Inc. and Hewlett-Packard Co.

In Phase 2, the steering committee must agree on specific

Functional requirements:	High	Med.	Low
Capture			
Architecture			
Classification			
Retention management/disposition			
Hold management & litigation support			
Index			
Search/retrieval			
Reporting/audit/supervision			
User interface			
Administration			
Storage management			
Security			
Information requirements			
Performance requirements			

TABLE 1: *Developing email-archiving requirements*
(Source: Contoural Inc.)

requirements for the email-archiving project. What systems will it support? What is the volume of messages that will pass through it each day? What information should be retained? The answers to these questions will help set the criteria that will be used to select a product. How complete the discussion is within the committee can determine the success or failure of the project.

Key functional areas to consider when developing a full requirements document are listed in . Each requirement should be ranked according to its overall importance.

- **HIGH** — a must-have function
- **MEDIUM** — a function it would be nice to have
- **LOW** — a function that is not important overall

The steering committee should collect additional technical requirements and other information requirements as well.

PHASE 3: Selecting a vendor and a product

ONCE THE REQUIREMENTS for the email-archiving project are well defined, then the product selection begins. This part of the project can be intimidating, with vendors showing their wares and putting the best spin on them. It is critically important to stick to the agreed-upon product requirements and not allow vendor spin to redirect the process.

The first task in selecting an email-archiving product is researching the available options and making a short list of potential choices. Start with research reports from analysts, media outlets and conferences. These reports can narrow the list and raise new options. Look at vendor Web sites and pay particular attention to lists of product features. Some sites allow access to installation and configuration documentation, which can help determine the appropriateness and completeness of the email-archiving project.

Make sure the product-support requirements list all the technical components of your company's infra-

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structure. Do not waste time on products that cannot be installed in your environment. Next, ask vendors for product information via a formal request for information, or RFI, process. Outline requirements and include details of the technical environment as well as projected growth. Select three to five potential products, and send the RFI through appropriate channels -- either through the vendors themselves or through their resellers. Give a deadline of four to six weeks for vendors to respond. Make sure all vendors receive the same information.
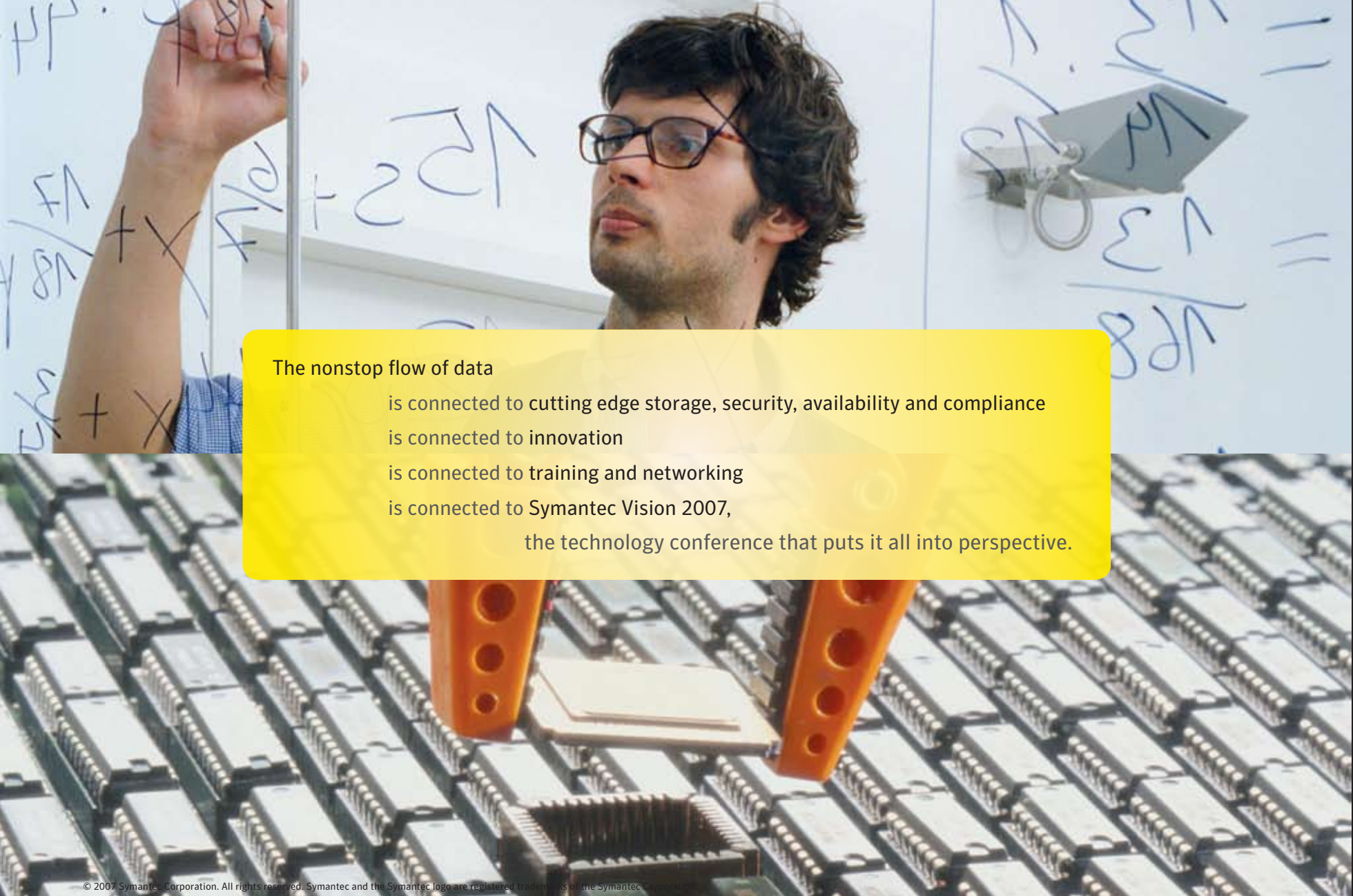
Invite all who respond to give an on-site presentation outlining their proposals. The selection team can then examine the proposal and ask questions about how the product will fit in its intended environment. Eliminate any incompatible products. Expect presentations

> Be sure to test management applications and recovery procedures — just because a system can save messages does not guarantee its usability.

to last a couple of hours, and reserve a couple more for questions. Ask each vendor to provide a sample of its product for lab testing.

Once the selection team has determined which products will work, get the best price through a request for proposals, or RFP. Once again, outline the requirements, but this time mention specific products. Then send a document to the vendors or resellers to request prices. Give them another four to six weeks to respond, but make it clear that price negotiations end at this point. Carefully check the responses to ensure they include all requests.

By this time, there may be only a few vendors left. Let them know that your selection is imminent, and invite each to install its product in a test environment to prove that it really works. Call each vendor's technical support personnel to see how well they respond to your questions. And be sure to test management applications and recovery procedures -- just because a system can save messages does not guarantee its usability. Notify all vendors of their status, and then invite your chosen vendor on site to kick off the implementation phase.

Getting started | Gathering requirements | Selecting a vendor and a product | Implementing and deploying the product

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PHASE 4: Implementing and deploying the product

IMPLEMENTATION WILL ECHO the structured process used in product selection. Start with a pilot installation so you can focus on a small subset of the environment. This should go smoothly, assuming the product-selection process was thorough. Let the system run for a while to ensure it provides the functionality the email-archiving product needs.

Divide the environment into logical segments for a phased deployment. It probably won't be practical to turn on the archiving system for the entire enterprise. This is not the time for product-configuration testing. Instead, the phased deployment reduces the workload for the implementation team, which cannot be expected to turn everything on at once. It also allows for the repair of any bugs found in the initial phases.

As deployment proceeds, educate employees about the new system. They must understand the company's policies for email archiving, including any new or updated policies and procedures that have been developed for the new email-archiving system. In many cases, email-archiving systems remain transparent to users and eliminate email quotas. Train users on any features that are available to them.

Once the system is up and running, audit its performance using a series of tests. Create a plan that tests the system thoroughly, including recovery of message sets. Ensure the number of messages entering the system is the expected number.

When planning an email-archiving project, companies must consider all the potential business drivers across the enterprise. The product that is eventually chosen should help ensure policy compliance, reduce the time and lower the cost of the litigation discovery process, enhance productivity and decrease storage costs, when possible. When this aspect of the project is completed, it's time to create an effective email archiving policy that meets the needs of users across the organization.

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About the author

KATHRYN HILTON *has worked in technology for more than 20 years as an industry analyst for Gartner Group and for several large storage companies. Hilton received a bachelor of arts degree in business economics from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and a master's degree in business administration from the University of Colorado Leeds School of Business. She is currently a senior analyst for policy at Contoural Inc., a provider of business and technology consulting services that focuses on litigation readiness, compliance, information and records management, and data storage strategy.*