

Your complete guide to Hosted Exchange

# Hosted Exchange for Business



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## What is Hosted Exchange?

Today, as for many years, most businesses rely heavily on email as the primary messaging tool at the heart of the business. It is something we just can't do without. In fact, Gartner suggests that as much as 75% of a company's intellectual property exists within its email and messages applications. For almost 20 years the world's most popular business email solution has been Microsoft Exchange.

In recent years, as cloud computing has evolved, cloud service providers have been able to provide Hosted Exchange as a service which delivers all the benefits of Exchange to your business, but without the cost of purchasing and maintaining your own Exchange servers.

Hosted Exchange is purchased by the mailbox for a small monthly subscription and the service is managed and maintained by the service provider. This has particularly benefited small and medium sized businesses that can now have access to corporate level technology, cost effectively and scale it up or down as and when they need.

## What are the benefits of Hosted Exchange?

Unfortunately, for many companies the cost of installing and running a Microsoft Exchange Server is simply too much and some just do not have enough technical resources in-house to do this.

However, with Exchange being the world's most popular business email solution, companies want and need the features and benefits it offers.

So, over the last 6-8 years, Hosted Exchange has become the best solution for millions of users around the world. With so many different email solutions around today, Exchange still leads the way with features and collaborative benefits which support users working together better.

There are a number of other benefits that vary from business to business but these are some of the key reasons why Exchange remains the number one business email solution and why both businesses and organisations continue to go hosted.

### *Some other key benefits of going hosted include:*

- ✓ Improved return on investment over in-house exchange.
- ✓ Better productivity gains.
- ✓ Enterprise class Infrastructure.
- ✓ Easy integration of MS SharePoint and Lync.
- ✓ Market leading Mobile integration.
- ✓ No scalability issues.
- ✓ Refocus in-house IT resources.
- ✓ 24/7 technical support.
- ✓ 99%+ Service level agreements.
- ✓ Keep up to date with latest versions.

## How easy is it to migrate to Hosted Exchange?

There are a number of tried and tested methods of managing an Exchange migration; it really depends on what solutions or platform you are moving from.

If you have an existing Exchange server then the process followed to migrate depends on which version you are running e.g. 2003, 2007 or 2010 and a few other parameters. Any good Exchange provider will be able to agree a migration plan which is suitable for your specific circumstances and assign a migration technician to manage the migration with you.

If you are moving from another hosting provider, it is usually even easier - most providers will allow you to access the data files and move them from one provider to another as the data belongs to you. If you are setting up a new business there is no migration to consider and you can literally be up and running in minutes.

Finally, if you are moving from another type of email solution including Gmail, Office 365, Zimbra or anything else, a good hosting provider will be experienced in dealing with migrations from these services to Hosted Exchange.



### *Why consider Hosted Exchange instead of basic POP email?*

Gartner's recent study determined that up to 75% of a company's intellectual property exists within their email infrastructure and other messaging applications

With Hosted Exchange, your business email is protected by the latest version of Barracuda Anti-Spam and Virus Firewall all hosted in secured UK based ISO 27001 certified Datacentre.

## Is Hosted Exchange Reliable?

Where Software as a Service (SaaS) is concerned, Hosted Exchange is a mature, stable and reliable business email solution, with the first major providers having been around for around 8 years or even more now.

The first iteration of the service was on the old Exchange 2007 platform, then in 2010 Microsoft released Exchange 2010 which had specific security and reliability features designed for hosting the product. More recently Exchange 2013 was released which is built from the ground up around hosting, and goes even further in improving reliability and security.



So as we begin 2014, Hosted Exchange has matured into one of the most reliable business email solutions you can buy, only if you choose a good quality provider with a strong reputation for developing and supporting the service.

Most providers now guarantee services up time of 99% or more for their Exchange services but it is always a good idea to read reviews and even talk to existing clients who are using the product to see what their experience has been.

## Where my data is stored and is it safe?

This all depends on which service provider you choose. For UK companies, it is always preferable to find a provider who is based in and uses UK data centres. That means your data will remain in the UK and will be protected by UK data protection laws which are among the strictest in the world.

Some industries have regulations that govern where certain data can be held so for UK organisations it is better to choose a good, established UK provider and look for those with ISO-27001 certified data centres (the ISO standard covering data security).

## Can I still use my email if I travel abroad?

Yes, one of the key benefits of using a hosted service is that you can use your email on as many different devices as you like from anywhere in the world seamlessly and it will all sync automatically (known as Autosync). So if you read an email on your iPad in Australia, and then open your laptop back in the UK that email will show as read as it all sync's in the cloud.

***NB: If you are accessing your email abroad on a mobile device over 3G/4G you are likely to incur mobile data costs. It is advisable to consult with your mobile operator for their data costs whilst abroad.***

## Choosing your Hosted Exchange Provider

Today, there are so many Hosted Exchange providers that it can be difficult to decide which way to go. Nevertheless, the same basic principles apply as choosing any other service. It is important to make sure they have a good track record and a reputation for providing the service you want, so make sure you read reviews and where possible speak to other clients using the service.

There are some pre-requisites though that you need to check. Make sure they are both hosted in and have UK based support which you can contact easily as many providers can be difficult to speak to quickly and easily if you need support.

Also, make sure you check the data centres are in the UK and that they are ISO-27001 certified. Finally, check whether the potential provider can actually support your migration plan with a migration manager and do not only have guides to help you do everything yourself. Most small migrations can be done easily but for larger projects you will need a provider who can agree and execute a migration plan for you. Regardless of the size, there should always be someone to offer help wherever you may need it.

When it comes to pricing, do not be fooled by headline prices as these often increase by as much as 50% when you add the features you need or if you do not have the minimum number of users to obtain that price. Look for a package that suits your needs where the price is easily available.

### *5 Top tips of choosing the right Hosted Exchange provider:*

- ✓ Check Reviews and Speak to Clients
- ✓ Confirm SLA Vs Actual Uptime
- ✓ Ask for Migration Support
- ✓ Check where the data is hosted
- ✓ Confirm mail archiving period

## Summary

Businesses will always rely on email until we find a better way to message. Until then, it is a mission critical service.

Outsourcing, although scary in prospect for some, has become the most tried and tested method of gaining access to secure and reliable business grade email over the last few years and that will continue according to Microsoft and industry analyst Gartner.

Among all of the business email solutions available, Microsoft Exchange continues to lead the way for user numbers and continues to develop as a true enterprise class solution.

Through hosting, it is now available to every business whether you have a single user or 1000, cost effectively and easy to adopt.

So when it comes to business email, Hosted Exchange is still the natural choice.

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**[enquiries@cloud4computers.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@cloud4computers.co.uk)**

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