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The Importance of Messaging in the Enterprise:
A Survey of Email Application Continuity



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ApplicationContinuity.Org Research
February 2006

Introduction

Email messaging is the mostly widely relied upon mode of communication in today's enterprise organizations, surpassing all other forms of communication, including the telephone and direct personal interaction. Yet, with this reliance on messaging, systems continue to fail. Despite the evident importance of messaging, only 23.3% of respondents rated their current messaging continuity plan as "excellent".

This report is based upon a survey that was conducted in December of 2005 to study the importance of messaging as a component of overall enterprise infrastructure applications, to study how employees communicate with each other and with customers, and to examine the strategies that organizations have put in place to ensure continuity of messaging applications. We evaluated the percentages of applications that rely on messaging to communicate with employees, how employees communicate among themselves, and how employees communicate with partners and customers. We then questioned respondents on messaging downtime and on in-place and planned messaging continuity efforts. Additional data was gathered on the composition of in-place messaging systems and the number of messaging users on those systems.

Summary

- Messaging is critically important to organizations. 78% of respondents had deployed enterprise applications that relied on messaging systems to communicate to employees. Of those, call center applications were cited in 44.5% of the survey responses.
- Email is the communications medium of choice. Employees rely on email messaging for the majority of communication to other employees, contractors and agents. 73% cited email for more than 60% of their internal communications, contrasted with those who relied on the telephone or on in-person interaction.
- Employees also rely on email messaging for the majority of communications to customers and potential customers. 59% cited email for more than 60% of their communications with customers.
- Downtime issues with email are nearly universal. Over 90% of respondents had experienced messaging downtime in the previous 12 months.
- Time to recover from messaging failures varied. 23.5% cited recovery times of from 1 to 4 hours, 46.3% cited downtimes of from 15 to 60 minutes, and 19.9% cited downtimes of under 15 minutes.
- Messaging system failures carry a heavy cost to the organization. 34.3% called these associated costs "significant," 19.4% didn't know and 41.8% said the cost was "negligible."

Survey Methodology

The survey was conducted via an independent database of IT professionals. The survey was emailed to potential participants by ApplicationContinuity.Org without identifying the sponsor of the survey. There were 187 respondents from various levels within corporate IT departments. A complete breakdown of respondents is shown in **Figure 1**.

Participants were offered a copy of the completed report, but were not compensated to participate in the survey.

The survey was sponsored by TENEROS, the developer of the Application Continuity Appliance for Microsoft Exchange. TENEROS was not identified in the survey.

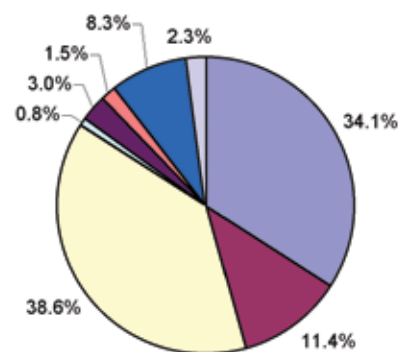
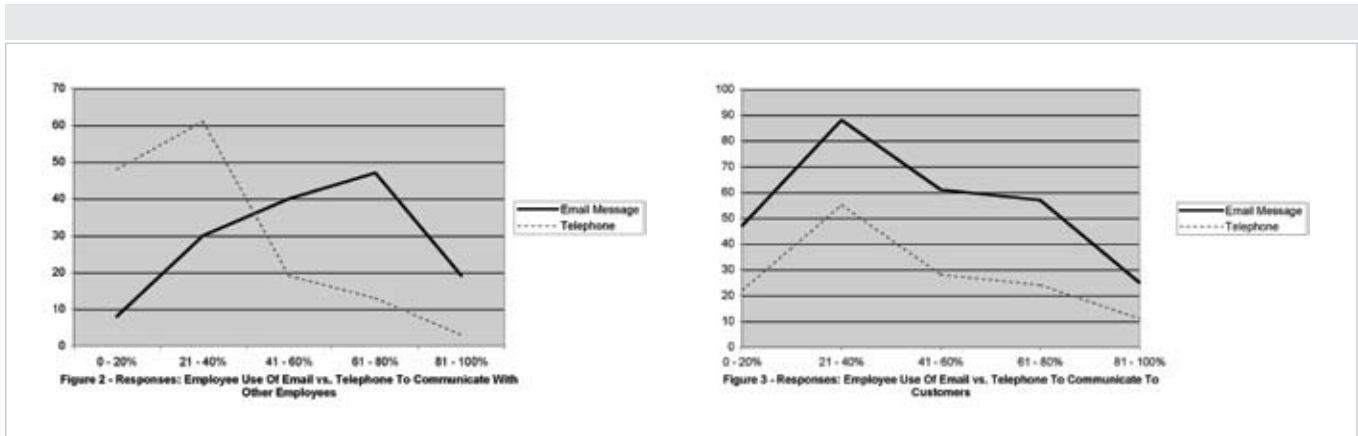


Figure 1 - Survey Participant Breakdown



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Organizations Rely Heavily On Email Messaging

Survey respondents clearly indicated that messaging was used for the majority of communication with other employees as well as with customers and potential customers.

Figure 2 shows the number of responses to the question “How do employees communicate with other employees, agents and contractors in order to accomplish tasks?” as a percentage of their overall use as a communications tool.

For external communications with customers and potential customers the results are similar (**Figure 3**). Email communication was cited as the most often used means of interaction with customers and potential customers; although telephone communication was relied on more frequently in customer interactions than in the case of internal communications.

Additional data was gathered on the use of in-person (personal) interaction as a means of communication with other employees; 79% cited personal interaction as being used less than 40% of the time. In the case of customer interaction 72% cited personal interaction as being used less than 40% of the time.

Users Are Experiencing Email Failures And Downtime

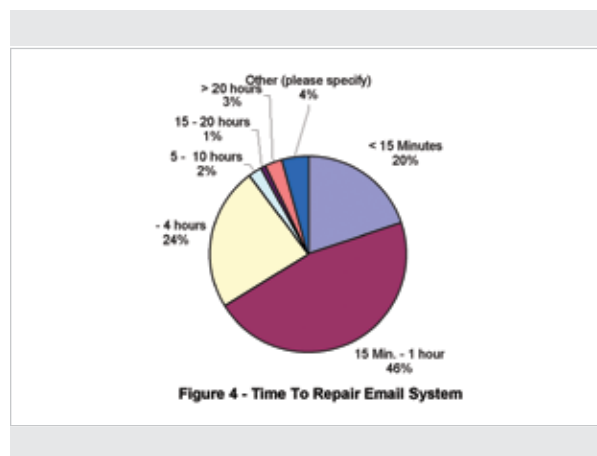
Respondents to the survey cited how often email systems were unavailable to users due to system failures (unplanned system outages) and to scheduled (planned) maintenance. 74.3% reported at least one instance of unplanned email system failure in the last year, of which 23.7% reported more than 3 unplanned outages in the same time period. Planned maintenance added to the occurrences of downtime, with 63.3% reporting more than 3 occurrences of planned email downtime.

Downtime is cumulative. Overall email unavailability varied between zero downtime, reported in 9% of the organizations to 29.1% that experienced more than 12 hours of downtime annually

Messaging Downtime Carries A Cost To Organizations

34.4% of respondents stated that the costs associated with messaging downtime were significant. One survey participant cited a figure of \$50,000 for each 15-minute period of downtime. 19.4% did not know the cost to the organization and 41.8% reported the cost as negligible.

Time-to-repair messaging system failures ranged from the 19.9% who reported recovery times of less than 15 minutes to a number of instances where recovery took longer than 20 hours.





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Current Strategies To Prevent Downtime

The organizations that participated in this survey employ a variety of strategies to mitigate email downtime, and most have identified additional plans for the future. Traditional onsite backup via tape or other storage was in use at 94% of the respondents locations. Strategies including failover systems and replicated email servers are either in place or planned for all but a small percentage of survey participants, with the largest companies in the lead. However, these systems may lessen the downtime figures but do not appear to be eliminating email downtime.

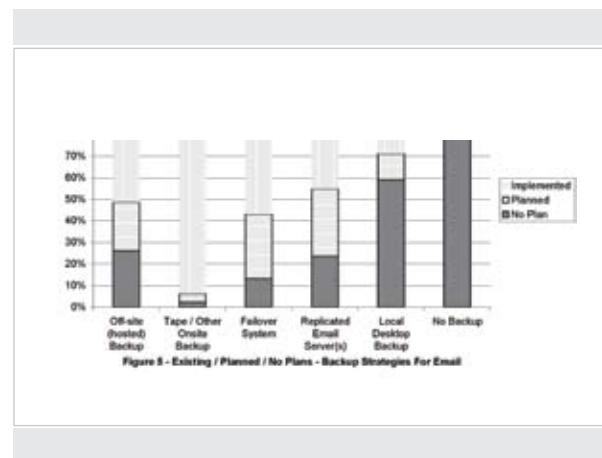
Does Organizational Size Matter?

23.3% of the organizations that responded to the survey described their continuity plan as "excellent." It may come as no surprise that these were principally larger companies. 83.4% of respondents that described their continuity plans as "excellent" had more than 500 employees and 26.7% had more than 25,000 employees. These companies deployed failover and replicated email services more often than smaller organizations.

Impact and Planning

Email messaging is critical to the daily operations of almost every organization. The majority of communications both within the organization and to the outside world is accomplished via messaging systems.

Email systems have not yet reached the point of reliability (99.999% or 5.2 minutes per year availability) that a previous generation enjoyed with their primary means of communication – the telephone. Systems continue to fail. The failures carry a cost that is difficult to calculate by many – almost 20% of survey respondents did not know the high cost to their organizations. Larger organizations appear to be better able to plan, develop and deploy strategies for email messaging continuity, and appear more satisfied with the results. Larger organizations typically have the resources, both in IT staff and in dollars to employ techniques that ensure better uptime. These techniques rely heavily on fully replicated and redundant messaging systems – in essence requiring double the expense. Furthermore, the best techniques are generally only providing 99.9 reliability or 8.6 hours of annual downtime.



Sponsored by

The Teneros Application Continuity Appliance™ for Microsoft @ Exchange Teneros developed the Application Continuity Appliance for Microsoft Exchange to provide organizations with complete, end-user email messaging continuity during both planned and unplanned downtime of Microsoft Exchange, without the ongoing, in-house IT resource requirements and high investment dollars typically expended by larger organizations.

About Teneros

Teneros develops business-continuity products for the mission-critical Microsoft applications that fuel the operations of mid-market companies and branch offices of enterprises worldwide. Teneros has pioneered a new category of solution: the Teneros Application Continuity Appliance™. The first release, for Microsoft Exchange, provides Instant-On failover during Exchange server planned or unplanned downtime. The Teneros appliance provides 10-minute installation, requires no ongoing maintenance, and needs no configuration change or software added to the Exchange server.

For information about the Teneros Application Continuity Appliance please visit www.teneros.com or call 1.650.641.7400.