



Wortham Insurance Gains Email Assurance with MailShadow® OnSite

"Being on the gulf coast we're no strangers to hurricanes, and being in the insurance business, it's imperative that we are always ready to communicate and handle our customers' claims. We chose MailShadow OnSite because there is no other product that can deliver a real-time 'hot spare' of an Exchange database with a fast and simple failover process."

Aaron Fowler, Systems Administrator, Wortham Insurance

Customer Challenges

Being in hurricane territory, Wortham Insurance, the largest privately held independent insurance broker in Texas, needed a robust email continuity and disaster recovery solution to protect the 400 employees in the company. Because of its service-oriented business, Wortham's stringent requirements included:

- Ability to replicate and protect a large number of mailboxes
- Rapid failover with no user disruption
- Smooth integration of BlackBerry users
- Easy administration for IT staff
- Scalability for future expansion to other sites and users
- Superb technical support

Solution

Wortham Insurance runs its corporate messaging infrastructure on Microsoft Exchange 2003. The solution also consists of a MailShadow OnSite server running VMware ESX at each location, as well as BlackBerry Enterprise Servers (BES) to support 70 mobile users. Wortham uses MailShadow to synchronize and protect BlackBerry users' mailboxes back to the on-premises Exchange server. The primary site is in Houston, Texas and the disaster recovery site based in Austin. Over the next 18 months, Wortham plans to add another 200 users and other sites in Dallas, Fort Worth and San Antonio.

Wortham selected and installed MailShadow OnSite in the Spring of 2007. In September, with advance storm warnings and the foreknowledge that the company's primary systems in Houston would lose power during Hurricane Ike, the IT group failed over all the Exchange mailboxes to their recovery site in Austin the day prior to Hurricane Ike. At that point, Aaron Fowler, Wortham's IT Administrator, reported that not a single message, appointment or contact was lost, and happily for the end users, the process was nearly transparent.

Benefits

Committed to service excellence, Aaron Fowler had conducted a rigorous evaluation to find the best email continuity and DR solution for the company. Whether hurricanes or other causes of failure, Wortham could not tolerate email downtime. Because MailShadow OnSite delivers continuous bi-directional synchronization of email data, it can achieve an Exchange mailbox Recovery Time Objective (RTO) of less than 10 minutes and enable users to access email very quickly if a failure occurs. Thanks to its real-time replication, MailShadow OnSite saved time in data recovery and travel while also providing non-interrupted email service to users, including Wortham's mobile professionals with BlackBerry devices.

Aaron was also impressed by MailShadow OnSite's unique ability to replicate at the transaction level, thereby eliminating the problem with other replication solutions where corrupt data could be copied. Finally, with a large population of email users to support, Aaron appreciated MailShadow's powerful failover capabilities, which provide the granular precision to fail over specific mailboxes using pre-defined criteria. For example, if there were a performance issue with just one mailbox or storage group, the IT department could rapidly isolate and fail over the relevant user(s).

"I am pleased to report that not only was MailShadow OnSite the only product that could meet our criteria, but Cemaphore's technical support is also some of the best I have experienced in my 15 years in IT," Fowler added. "That's a very big deal for people like me who don't have the time to reverse engineer every product and implementation."