

## FEATURE

### ELIMINATE PST FILE PROBLEMS

By Ian Kilpatrick, chairman of leading VAD Wick Hill Group

PST files are a good example of the law of unintended consequences. They have proliferated because of the storage issues associated with Microsoft email products, most notably Outlook. Many people use them to store emails that can no longer be stored on the server because of mailbox quota restrictions.

However, PST issues have taken on a quite unpleasant life of their own. To get an idea of the scale of the problem, try googling "The problem with PST" and you'll come up with almost nine million items.

In exchange (no pun intended) for the reduction in server storage, PSTs have given us file management problems, compliance problems, recovery problems, deletion problems, security problems and, most ironically of all, storage problems. Not to mention increased helpdesk requirements, sprawling mailboxes and user discontent. Leaving aside the often significant user helpdesk issues, having PST files, puts the end user in charge of the data. This creates major problems for security, if the laptop is lost, or if the user deletes or copies key data, creating back-up problems for the IT team.

Perhaps it is time to consider the unthinkable - eliminate PST files. This will reduce helpdesk costs, reduce storage costs, improve data security and bring the business messaging environment back in line with the business goals

A number of easy-to-use solutions have now become available which bring the benefits of enterprise-class email archiving and management within the budget of smaller organisations. These provide for fast storage and retrieval, policy and back-up management, plus off-server storage, as well as ensuring compliance. They can also eliminate multiple-instances storage and the problems associated with PST files over 2GB.

For example, using Barracuda Message Archiver (which has no per user fees), it is possible to import all PST files, future proof them with Exchange stubbing, externally store the files on the system, and then disallow the creation of further PST files.

And this is all for the kind of pricing that, for most businesses, works out less than the cost of users and the helpdesk dealing with PST files issues.

#### ENDS

Ian Kilpatrick is chairman of value added distributor Wick Hill Group plc, specialists in secure infrastructure solutions. Kilpatrick has been involved with the Group for more than 30 years. Wick Hill is an international organisation supplying SMEs and most of the Times Top 1000 companies through a value-added network of accredited resellers.

Kilpatrick has an in-depth experience of computing with a strong vision of the future in IT. He looks at computing from a business point-of-view and his approach reflects his philosophy that business benefits and ease-of-use are the key factors in IT, rather than just technology. He has authored numerous articles and publications, as well as being a regular speaker at conferences, exhibitions and seminars.