

Enterprise Vault: Stay or Go?

What is Enterprise Vault?

When an organization has a large amount of data that needs to be stored, secured, and searchable, what's the answer? Enter Enterprise Vault. Originally developed by Digital Equipment Corporation (DEC) in 1999, Enterprise Vault was proposed as a large scale, searchable store for unstructured information. As an archiving product used primarily for emails and files, Enterprise Vault features include:

- Running archiving on schedule, according to policy, and storing data in Enterprise Vault Storage.
- Supporting Microsoft Exchange, IBM Domino, Microsoft SharePoint Server, SMTP archiving and Windows file servers.
- After an item has been archived, the original item is deleted to release storage.
- Creating a shortcut to allow seamless access even after archiving.

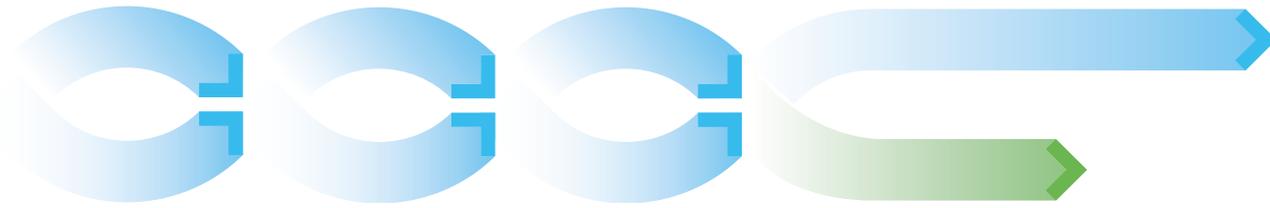
Enterprise Vault (often known as EV) is an answer to the growing problem of giving structure to large amounts of data, and reducing management complexity, but now that more and more large Enterprises are using Office 365, and adopting the many services that are built-in, do companies still need EV?

Why Enterprise Vault?

Enterprise Vault has many benefits, and you can think of EV as both 'types' of archiving system in one. Firstly, it offers mailbox size management, mail server recoverability time, and cost management. Secondly, EV provides compliance features, eDiscovery, and governance over your organization's email. Thus bringing together two desirable feature sets for archiving. For any organisation with multiple users, too much data can cause management complexity, increase risk, and make locating specific documents like old emails or contracts a very lengthy process. Considering the amount of emails a person can receive over the course of a month, year, and so on (and how few are deleted) this can lead to Microsoft Exchange becoming slower and slower. In this situation, an administrator can implement quotas to force users to archive emails, create PST files or delete them. Otherwise, even with an increase in storage to the email server, Exchange will still inevitably become slower with time.

How Do You Move EV to Office 365?

Despite the popularity and benefits of Enterprise Vault, recent changes in the IT landscape, (towards 'cloud-first' IT systems, like Office 365) mean that many organisations no longer need it. With the introduction of Office 365, this data can be moved from third-party archives, like Enterprise Vault, into a new cloud environment, using the Data Import Service.



There are four methods for moving this data:

Network Upload: uploading the data files to a temporary storage location in the Microsoft Cloud, then using the Office 365 Import Service to import the data to mailboxes or other sites in your Office 365 organization.

Drive Shipping: copying the files to an encrypted hard drive and shipping the drive to Microsoft directly. When the drive is received, it will be uploaded to a temporary storage location and through the Office 365 Data import Service the data can be moved to the mailboxes in your Office 365 organization.

Use a third-party tool: Quadrotech's email archive migration solution Archive Shuttle is able to quickly and efficiently move EV data into Office 365 or on-premises Exchange systems.

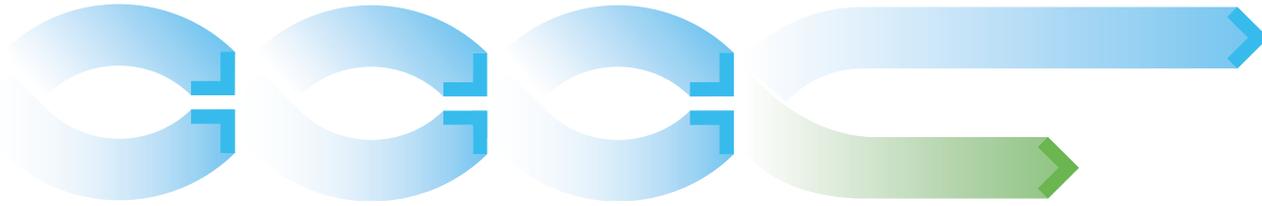
EV Rehydration: Not to do with thirst. This method works to 'rehydrate' EV shortcuts or 'stubs', joining all of the elements of the email (body, attachment, and stubs) into a full message again.

To Move or not to Move?

One factor that may encourage a move to Exchange Online is that companies (even SMBs) can struggle with Enterprise Vault data increasing over time. The volume of data isn't the problem – it's the quantity of files. Enterprise Vault creates numerous small files, and the high quantity often makes backing up a slow process. Even with smaller companies, the data generated is still sizeable, and with limited budget this becomes increasingly difficult to handle. With the availability of Cloud storage, the affordability, flexibility and scalability is much higher than that of on-premises storage options.

There are various obstacles which might prohibit or delay a move. Many archiving systems do not work well or at all with Office 365. By moving the mailbox to the cloud, the stubs are broken, thereby decreasing the value of the legacy archive, not to mention that your users will likely lose previously seamless access to their emails.

Another argument against migration lies in the decision of whether to use the built-in Office 365 archive (in-place archive) or another third party archive. This feeds into the secondary reason why organizations were compelled to use EV in the first place, compliance and eDiscovery. While these tools and features are robust, intelligent, and constantly improving, you need to consider whether the Microsoft archive meets the needs and capabilities of your company, and evaluate them against the regulations that you need to comply with. There is also an inevitable period where users will have delayed, disrupted access to their archive, once migration begins. It is important to consider how the migration tool you choose mitigates, or minimizes, any end user disruption.



That said, the benefits of Office 365 should not be underestimated. On-premises storage is costly, whereas the Office 365 In-Place archive is included in your enterprise subscription without extra cost. The flexibility, mobility, cost model variety, and almost limitless amount of low-cost storage are huge benefits, and worth serious consideration, even if you do feel tied to your Enterprise Vault archive.

Starting Afresh

Even starting your archiving anew in the cloud will require some level of cross-over between old system and new. Depending on your policies, you will likely have to keep data for a certain amount of time in order to comply with retention policies – whether it goes into the cloud, or stays on-premises. Journal data can be a problem (find out why), but if you can live through your remaining retention period, and are happy with searching in two locations until your old data expires, those EV servers can then be decommissioned. Exporting the data from Enterprise Vault can be done using filters, including by age, with the newest data sent to the cloud while the rest is left to time out.

Being required to start afresh and learn new systems is always daunting, and accessing data from multiple sources as the EV data lies in retention might be a slight inconvenience during migration. But the overall savings in time, cost and ease of access is worth it; an archive needless of backup and easily manageable and searchable via eDiscovery is invaluable.

If you're not quite ready to give up Enterprise Vault, but you want to make your first step towards the cloud, why not find out more about [EVNearSync for Azure](#). You can sync your entire EV archive into the Microsoft Cloud, giving you a fast, secure and seamless copy with a zero second Recovery Point Objective. Then, when you're ready to make the decision to move to Office 365, your EV can be moved directly from Azure into Office 365.

If you're looking to migrate Enterprise Vault to Office 365, [please get in touch today](#).