



## Hosting Your Own Email vs. Hosted Email

Tim Clarkin

One of the most common issues facing a small business is the question of how to handle email hosting. Any organization with their own email domain name (for instance, "Microsoft.com") must try and decide whether they would prefer to rely on their own internal infrastructure for hosting or if they would prefer to rely on a third-party provider to handle email for them. Each option presents advantages and disadvantages that need to be weighed out when considering something as vital as this.



If a business relies on a 3<sup>rd</sup> party provider, they do tend to save money initially on extra software and licensing, as well as not necessarily needing a separate or more powerful server. The other benefit tends to come from not really having ownership

of any issues that may come up. If your email is down, it is not something that is your problem to fix, it becomes the 3<sup>rd</sup> party provider's problem and the cost and responsibility falls squarely on that provider. The trade-off is that these providers tend to cost far more in the long run. Since they are providing the service and taking responsibility for your email being up and accessible, and your email being properly backed up, the amount per month is usually far greater than it would cost to host email in house. In some cases there's a good chance that the subscription cost could surpass the initial extra costs associated with hosting one's own email within the first 1-2 years. In addition to that, most hosted Microsoft Exchange providers have limits on how far back email can be restored to as well as inbox size limits.

When a business chooses to host their own email, the initial extra software costs for Microsoft Exchange, licenses for Exchange, and spam protection can be off-putting, but those costs are really a "one-time only" expense that come

with a new server every 4-6 years. There are certainly extra costs in between for maintenance, updates, and troubleshooting an Exchange server, but those tend to be dwarfed by the several hundred dollars per month that a hosting company could charge. In addition, you also gain control over your system. Hosting one's own email gives businesses the power to control exactly what size limits users may have for email, as well as how long backed up data is going to be retained for.

So what is the right choice? It depends upon the business and their specific needs, size, and budget, and there isn't really one specific choice that will be right for every business. What makes perfect sense for some small businesses with five or less employees might not be feasible for an office with twelve or more employees. If you have questions about what you're using and the alternative options out there, you can call M&H Consulting at 866-964-8324 or email questions to [support@mhconsults.com](mailto:support@mhconsults.com).

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### How to Select a Safe Password

Millions of people use computers for the storing and sharing of data, and some computers have tens or hundreds of users over the course of a single day. You must exercise caution when securing any data you do not want others to see. A password helps protect your data from being accessed by other users, however a chain is only as strong as its weakest link, and many computer systems are broken into not because of lax security software and updates, but because of easy to guess user passwords. Spending all the money in the world on advanced security is useless if even one user picks an easy to guess password, allowing intruders to instantly bypass all the security. For this reason, it is important to select a password that is difficult for others to guess or otherwise obtain. Here are some basic guidelines to help in this process.

- 1. Use a meaningless sequence of characters.** Avoid basing your password on personal history or information. If a person knows anything about you, he or she may be able to guess your password based on that knowledge. Using any actual words in your password is a potential security risk.
- 2. Use a combination of letters and numbers.** When your password contains both letters and numbers, this expands the set of possible characters, thereby making the password even harder to guess. If the password is case-sensitive, use a combination of uppercase and lowercase letters.
- 3. Use special characters.** If allowed, special characters such as the exclamation mark, ampersand, etc., make your password more difficult to guess. In addition to expanding the set of possible characters in your password, special characters are often less intuitive and therefore less frequently checked in attempts to guess your password. An example would also be to replace letters with symbols such as using @ instead of the letter a.
- 4. Make your password as long as possible.** This will make it even more difficult to guess. Be careful that you don't make it so long that you will forget it easily. In most cases now a lot of websites require a certain amount of characters to be used such as a minimum of eight characters including alpha numeric characters.

-From [www.ehow.com](http://www.ehow.com)



### What phone is right for me?

Chris Duffy

Thinking about buying a new phone and getting that new smart phone? There's a lot to think about when choosing what phone is the right option. Currently, the three main options are the Blackberry, Androids, and the Iphone, all with their own strengths and weaknesses.

The Blackberry is a favorite with executives mostly because of its fast access to email as well as its security features. Blackberry Enterprise Server which is needed to use a Blackberry with Microsoft Exchange email allows many added features. Blackberry Enterprise Server has a push feature which updates email on the Blackberry phone instantly as well as optimizing the messages to reduce battery drain and data charges if you do not have an unlimited plan. BES also has the ability to set policies to prevent the users from using their work phones for non-business related work as well as the ability to remotely wipe the device if it is lost or stolen. The downside to most Blackberries is the size and web speed. Most Blackberries have a full keyboard with a small screen which makes them wider than most phones. Blackberries were developed more for business users

so they do not have some of the luxuries of other phones. The browser on the Blackberry is not the fastest and is a little cumbersome making it hard to read sometimes.



Android phones are the newest smart phones on the market and have been quickly making a name for themselves. Androids are some of the fastest smart phones on the market at the moment. The browser on Android devices allows for pages to load almost as fast as if you were on a computer. Androids also have the Android Marketplace which has many useful apps both paid and free. The downside to Android phones is that they are only available on certain networks and can drain the battery incredibly quick just by sitting in standby. They also can start to slow down as the apps can run in the back-

ground and will use up the phone's memory.

IPhones are the most popular smart phones at the moment mostly because of the large amounts of applications that are available on the iTunes store. The iPhone has a large, high resolution screen that can be used to view clear, crisp videos. They also now offer connectivity to Microsoft Exchange Server to allow for email in most corporate environments. The newest iPhone includes two cameras to allow for video chat while connected to a WiFi connection. The downside to the iPhone is that it is only available on two carriers right now (Verizon and AT&T). They also had a major glitch with the latest iPhone which has a problem with the antenna where if you hold it the wrong way the phone would lose its signal.

In the end it depends on what you are looking for from a new phone and whether or not you are tied to a certain carrier. If you would like more information about the latest phones available and what option might be best for you, contact M&H Consulting at 866-964-8324, or email us at support@mhconsults.com.

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