A Comparison of Email and Collaboration Platforms

An Osterman Research White Paper

Published October 2012

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The corporate email market is saturated, email systems are all the same, and users are moving on to more useful modes of communication – or so goes the conventional wisdom about email.

In fact, nothing could be further from the truth:

- Email systems continue to be most used single tool for communications and collaboration, and organizations of all sizes continue to evaluate and deploy new email platforms on a regular basis. For example, a May 2012 Osterman Research of mid-sized and large organizations found that one-third of these organizations are planning to migrate to a new messaging system within the next 12 months.

- Email systems are not all the same: there is wide variability in the features and functions of leading email systems, the impact they have on IT labor requirements, and their Total Cost of Ownership (TCO).

- Users are adopting different forms of communication like social media and text messaging, but these tools are primarily additions to the communications mix and not replacements for email.

The bottom line is that email is still widely used, its use is increasing, and any organization should carefully evaluate its email options in order to improve the capabilities available to users and to reduce its overall TCO.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The goal of this white paper is to present an Osterman Research analysis of VMware Zimbra in the context of long-term requirements to consider, key features of VMWare Zimbra, and a comparison with several leading email systems. Our analysis revealed that:

- VMware Zimbra offers many compelling features when evaluating long-term, collaboration requirements and compares favorably with other email systems.

- VMware Zimbra is notable for the flexibility of its deployment, its user experience through its browser-based client, and its integration with best-of breed unified communications solutions.

- VMWare Zimbra is less expensive than many other leading on-premise email solutions in organizations ranging from 500 to 20,000 users.

ABOUT THIS WHITE PAPER

This white paper offers an unbiased feature comparison for leading email systems. It also provides a brief overview of VMware Zimbra, the sponsor of this white paper, and the company's relevant solutions.

BEST PRACTICES WHEN EVALUATING REQUIREMENTS

In evaluating an organization's communication and collaboration requirements, there are three fundamental considerations:

1. Consider long-term requirements for email and communication and collaboration tools in the context of how people work, the corporate culture that exists today and how it is evolving, and the changing requirements and direction of the internal IT infrastructure.

Email is still widely used, its use is increasing, and any organization should carefully evaluate its email options in order to improve the capabilities available to users and to reduce its overall TCO.

2.   Evaluate current and future deployment requirements.

3.   Understand the actual Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) for email.

CONSIDER LONG-TERM REQUIREMENTS

Although current features, pricing, and TCO are key considerations in selecting an email system, there are a number of long-term factors that should also be involved in the decision-making process as organizations evaluate their options:

- **How will email be used in three to five years?**
  Some believe that email is on its way out and that it will be replaced by social media tools, text messaging and other messaging capabilities as newer workers enter the workforce. Osterman Research strongly believes that is not the case. Instead, email – which is used 165 minutes per day by the typical workplace user – will evolve into more of a portal for email and other types of communication. For example, some email clients today allow social media and instant messaging to be used directly from within the email client itself. Email systems that permit this integration can lower TCO because they reduce the "friction" that can result when users must continually switch between interfaces to view their various modes of communication.

  Osterman Research believes that email will become something of a clearinghouse for various types of content. During the next few years, email will be managed via a combination of corporate policies and client-side rules that will determine how communications are managed, and that will decide the best mode to employ on a real time basis. For example, an email to someone should be received on whatever device and in whatever mode a recipient desires based on his or her presence status, time of day or other information.

- **How will email need to integrate with other capabilities like Unified Communications?**
  Another important consideration, somewhat related to the point above, is that email will need to integrate with other capabilities like unified communications, text messaging and various corporate applications. A robust unified communications infrastructure supports the growing trend towards telework, and can significantly reduce IT and telephony costs. Unified communications functionality such as integrated voicemail, video, and web meetings are becoming more important to organizations by the day. Systems that integrate easily with best-of-breed unified communications capabilities will deliver more functionality, increase productivity, and keep TCO low.

- **What will the corporate computing environment look like long term?**
  Another important consideration is the long-term view of what the corporate computing environment will be. Will it be based primarily in the cloud with only the highest value services managed on-premises? Will it continue to be managed primarily using in-house systems because IT has a bent toward keeping things behind the corporate firewall?   Will basic capabilities be managed in-house and more sophisticated services provided by cloud providers because of a lack of in-house expertise? Will the infrastructure remain on-premises but be managed by third parties remotely?

- **How will mobile workers be supported?**
  IT will increasingly be required to support mobile users and teleworkers. For example, a recent National Small Business Association study showed that 44% of small businesses permit employees to work remotely. A 2010 WorldatWork study showed that 26.2 million US employees worked at home remotely at least one day/month. These workers are also taking advantage of Unified Communications functionality as mentioned above, leveraging Smartphones and other devices, and even working with personal devices as evidenced by the BYOD trend. IT will

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continue to provide a secure, robust email and collaboration system for these mobile works.

- **How adaptable are leading email systems to the new IT landscape?**
  Finally, the new IT landscape is currently being redefined by both the new demands workers are making on IT, and the rise of cloud computing. For example, can your email system deliver a seamless user experience, regardless of how it is accessed? Is your current email system adapting to meet these trends, or is it lagging behind based on outdated modes of thinking?

These are all questions that will have an important bearing on which email system an organization should choose. For example, an inexpensive, on-premise email system might be migrated easily to a cloud model, or it could create disruption and require something akin to a "rip-and-replace" of the existing infrastructure. If the former, it will maintain the low TCO for which the system was adopted in the first place; if the latter, it could end up being more expensive than systems that today have a higher TCO.

In short, the key questions need to be these: a) What are your organization's core requirements today - the short term view of email systems; and b) how adaptable is an email system to the future IT landscape – the long term view of collaboration?

EVALUATE YOUR DEPLOYMENT OPTIONS
The recent change in the IT landscape has necessitated an additional strategy to consider among IT decision makers. There has been a significant increase in the deployment options available when choosing an email system. In addition, organizations may make a choice today while also considering what future flexibility is available with that offering.

For example, many organizations are going beyond a simple choice between the on-premise and public cloud offerings. Educational institutions have often chosen a hybrid model, supporting faculty and staff with a more fully featured on-premise solution, while students would access a browser-based hosted email capability. Choices now have expanded to include a virtual appliance, which enables deployment of a private cloud, and integrates easily with virtualized environments.

The advantage of the hybrid approach – whether using a combination of on-premise and hosted services, or a combination of traditional and Web clients – is that on-premise IT staff are not needed in locations that cannot afford them, nor is an office manager required to be the de facto "IT person".

With regard to the choice of on-premise, cloud-based or hybrid email solutions, there is no "right" answer. The issue must be determined based on TCO issues, as well as how and which mail-enabled applications are used in an organization, the geographic distribution of employees, corporate initiatives for migrating to the cloud and other factors.

UNDERSTAND THE ACTUAL TCO OF YOUR EMAIL SYSTEM
When we have performed studies on the actual TCO of email systems, two trends emerge. First, many decision makers have not completed the analysis to understand the true TCO of their current email system. Factors in the overall cost include not only server or licensing fees and hardware, but also administration and expenditures related to security, clustering, disaster recovery and business continuity systems. The bottom line is that decision makers need to compare the *actual* cost of their current system to any future alternative in order to make a well-informed decision.

In addition, the time investments required to manage an email system, as well as labor rates, will likely have a MAJOR impact on the overall TCO, although this depends to a large extent on the system under examination. Most decision makers

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fail to accurately estimate both labor required for management of email systems, as well as the cost of that labor.

THE KEY FEATURE COMPARISON OF VMWARE ZIMBRA AND OTHER ENTERPRISE EMAIL SYSTEMS

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this comparison was to understand the how Zimbra stacks-up against key competitors in different areas. Three on-premise email systems, IBM Lotus Notes Domino, Microsoft Exchange, and Novell GroupWise, and one cloud-based email offering, Google Apps, were analyzed for this purpose.

Osterman Research provides in this document a summary of VMware Zimbra and a comparison with these other systems in deployment options, browser experience, Unified Communications, IT Management, and TCO.

It is important to note that Osterman Research considers all of the systems analyzed in this white paper to be viable and useful systems from leading, reputable vendors. We are not attempting to discredit any of the systems or vendors discussed here, but rather to provide an objective overview of key issues that decision makers should consider as they evaluate their selection of new messaging systems and vendors.

DEPLOYMENT

Zimbra is available both as an on-premise system, as well as a hosted solution by a number of independent providers worldwide. This permits an organization to deploy Zimbra on-premise and later migrate to the cloud with relative ease, or vica versa. Moreover, it permits relatively seamless deployment of a hybrid system in which some users are served by on-premise infrastructure and others are served by cloud providers.

In the chart below, you will note that Zimbra offers the greatest number of options for deployment, while Google Apps has only one mode of deployment. Organizations seeking flexibility or being able to choose from all the available deployments might benefit from considering Zimbra.

Deployment Models for Leading Email Systems

VMware Zimbra	Microsoft Exchange	Google Apps	IBM Lotus Notes Domino	Novell GroupWise
Traditional software deployment on existing physical or virtual server	Traditional software deployment on existing physical or virtual server	Cloud/hosted	Traditional software deployment on existing physical or virtual server	Traditional software deployment on existing physical or virtual server
Cloud/hosted	Cloud/hosted		Cloud/hosted	Cloud/hosted
VMware cloud partners	VMware cloud partners			
Virtual appliance				

In the area of deployments, IT decision makers should consider asking key questions. How many options are available for deploying the solution? What will your IT infrastructure look like in the long term? Will sustentative chances in the current IT infrastructure require a 'rip and replace' or just a minor modification?

Zimbra is available both as an on-premise system, as well as a hosted solution by a number of independent providers worldwide. This permits an organization to deploy Zimbra on-premise and later migrate to the cloud with relative ease, or vica versa.

USER EXPERIENCE

Zimbra offers an identical user experience when used via a browser interface or when using the free thick client available for Windows, OS X or Linux. This can lead to further reductions in TCO, since no training is required for users switching from one interface to the other, friction is not introduced for users switching back-and-forth between Web and thick clients on a regular basis, and any desktop operating system can be supported.

Zimbra also allows for multiple calendar management and integrates with Google and Yahoo accounts directly.

The following table demonstrates that Zimbra offers slightly more seamlessness and capabilities when it comes to browser experience.

User Experience for Leading Email Systems

VMware Zimbra	Microsoft Exchange	Google Apps	IBM Lotus Notes Domino	Novell GroupWise
No difference in user experience between browsers	Some difference in user experience between browsers	Minimal difference in user experience between browsers	Minimal difference in user experience between browsers	Minimal difference in user experience between browsers
No difference in user experience between thick client and browser	Some difference in user experience between thick client and browser	Full offline support via thick client via beta app (requires Google Chrome)	Can be integrated with other services via plug-in	Can be integrated with other services via plug-in
Integrated with some Web services out-of-the-box	Can be integrated with other services via plug-in		Full offline support via thick client	Full offline support via thick client
Easy integration with other services	Full offline support via thick client			
Full offline support via thick client				

Issues for IT decision makers to consider include that the user experience can differ from one browser to another, or between think client and browser. Also, different user experiences can also drive up help desk cost and potentially impact user productivity. In addition, the level of integration with Web services can also impact user productivity.

UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS

Zimbra supports best-of-breed integration with leading Unified Communications vendors, notably Cisco Systems and Mitel. This permits an organization to more seamlessly deliver UC capabilities to its users, and leverage investments it may have already made in these technologies.

The chart below demonstrates that all solutions currently deliver Unified Communications capabilities in different ways. Of note, Zimbra offers some basic UC features in its base product including click-to-dial, voicemail, chat and presence.

Zimbra also offers heartbeat monitoring for all of the Zimbra components. When one of the component goes down, it does not have a heartbeat anymore and vSphere takes steps to ensure the component recovers. This does not occur for MS Exchange, for example.

Zimbra offers an identical user experience when used via a browser interface or when using the free thick client available for Windows, OS X or Linux. This can lead to further reductions in TCO.

Unified Communications Capabilities in Leading Email Systems

VMware Zimbra	Microsoft Exchange	Google Apps	IBM Lotus Notes Domino	Novell GroupWise
Integrated with Cisco and Mitel UC solutions Can be integrated with other UC offerings Click-to-dial, voicemail, chat and presence are integrated into the base product	Can provide UC functionality via Lync and other platforms	Can provide UC functionality through third-party providers	Integrated communications via IBM Sametime and IBM Sametime Unified Telephony Can provide UC functionality through third-party providers	Can provide UC functionality through third-party providers

IT decision makers should consider that unified communications is becoming more important as a means of reducing IT and telephony costs. UC is also increasingly critical so that remote workers can access all computing resources and better capabilities in this area can improve user efficiency.

IT MANAGEMENT

At Osterman Research we consider email and collaboration utilities for which costs must be driven as low as possible. Especially in tight or more-expensive labor markets, IT labor can be a critical issue.

Zimbra offers many benefits to IT including the ease of provisioning and managing users through a web-based administration console. It also provides the functionality to quickly enable and disable applications and hardware capabilities. In addition, end users can be empowered to take on some of the management functionality through self-service administration.

In addition, Zimbra offers flexible storage options. For example Exchange does not support NFS and Zimbra with vSphere provides a solution that can leverage the storage option that best meets the customer's business requirements - NFS included.

The following chart examines IT labor costs over three years for 500 seat and 10,000 seat deployments. Note there is a significant disparity between the level of IT labor required for various solutions.

IT Management Costs for Leading Email Systems

VMware Zimbra	Microsoft Exchange	Google Apps	IBM Lotus Notes Domino	Novell GroupWise
Three-year IT cost of labor for 500 users: $130k Three-year IT labor cost for 10,000 users: $531k	Three-year IT cost of labor for 500 users: $82k Three-year IT labor cost for 10,000 users: $1,146k	Three-year IT cost of labor for 500 users: $25k Three-year IT labor cost for 10,000 users: $379k	Three-year IT cost of labor for 500 users: $127k Three-year IT labor cost for 10,000 users: $1,076k	Three-year IT cost of labor for 500 users: $58k Three-year IT labor cost for 10,000 users: $409k

TOTAL COST OF OWNERSHIP

Email and collaboration continue to be expensive elements of the IT infrastructure, therefore it is important to consider TCO when comparing them. TCO calculations

There is a wide disparity in TCO between competing solutions, and Zimbra compares favorably to the other email systems we reviewed in this analysis.

include such elements as server and licensing costs, administration and labor, and any hardware requirements.

Note that there is a wide disparity in TCO between competing solutions, and that Zimbra compares favorably to the other email systems we reviewed in this analysis.

Total Cost of Ownership for Leading Email Systems

VMware Zimbra	Microsoft Exchange	Google Apps	IBM Lotus Notes Domino	Novell GroupWise
500 users, on-premises: $9.38/user/mo.	500 users, on-premises: $13.85/user/mo.	500 users, cloud/hosted: $5.57/user/mo.	500 users, on-premises: $14.66/user/mo.	500 users, on-premises: $11.58/user/mo.
10,000 users, on-premises: $3.38/user/mo.	10,000 users, on-premises: $12.17/user/mo.	10,000 users, cloud/hosted: $5.22/user/mo.	10,000 users, on-premises: $11.95/user/mo.	10,000 users, on-premises: $9.10/user/mo.
500 users, cloud/hosted: $5.98/user/mo.	500 users, cloud/hosted: $9.40/user/mo.			
10,000 users, cloud/hosted: $5.64/user/mo.	10,000 users, cloud/hosted: $9.05/user/mo.			

In summary, each organization will develop its list of key requirements and its short-list of vendors to evaluate. As shown from this comparison, Zimbra stacks up well against key competitors and is worthy of consideration by decision makers in small, mid-sized and large organizations.

The following table summarizes the key differences between VMware Zimbra and the other systems we evaluated in this analysis.

Summary of Key Feature Differences Between Leading Email Platforms

	VMware Zimbra	Microsoft Exchange	Google Apps	IBM Lotus Notes Domino	Novell Group Wise
Can deploy on physical server	●	●		●	●
Vendor cloud offering available		●	●	●	
Third party cloud offering available	●	●			●
Can deploy on virtual appliance	●				
Identical experience across browsers	●				
Identical experience in thick client and browser	●				
Web-based Administration Console	●				
Sync Policies and Wipe Remote Devices	●				

Zimbra offers a lower TCO than market leader Microsoft Exchange and other on-premise systems across all of the user ranges analyzed – for mid-sized organizations through large enterprises.

Summary of Key Feature Differences Between Leading Email Platforms (concluded)

	VMware Zimbra	Microsoft Exchange	Google Apps	IBM Lotus Notes Domino	Novell Group Wise
End-user self-service administration	●				
Full thick client support	●	●	●	●	●
Multiple Calendar Management Natively	●				
Supports OS for all Desktops	●				
Built-in integration with Web services	●		●		
Available integration with third party services	●	●	●	●	●
Built-in support for unified communications	●				
Add-on or third party support for unified communications	●	●	●	●	●
Flexible Storage Options	●				

CONCLUSION – WHY CONSIDER ZIMBRA?

Decision makers seeking an email system should seriously consider VMware Zimbra for several reasons:

• Zimbra is available both as an on-premise system, as well as a hosted solution by a number of independent providers worldwide. This permits an organization to deploy Zimbra on-premise and later migrate to the cloud with relative ease, or vica versa. Moreover, it permits relatively seamless deployment of a hybrid system in which some users are served by on-premise infrastructure and others are served by cloud providers.

• As discussed in a separate Osterman Research White Paper, *The TCO of Enterprise Email*, Zimbra offers a lower TCO than market leader Microsoft Exchange and other on-premise systems across all of the user ranges analyzed – for mid-sized organizations through large enterprises. This will result in significant savings for any size of organization – for example, an organization of 500 users will save nearly $27,000 annually by using on-premise Zimbra compared to on-premise Exchange, while an organization of 20,000 users will save nearly $2.1 million annually.

• Zimbra offers an identical user experience when used via a browser interface or when using the free thick client available for Windows, OS X or Linux. This can lead to further reductions in TCO, since no training is required for users switching from one interface to the other, friction is not introduced for users switching back-and-forth between Web and thick clients on a regular basis, and any desktop operating system can be supported.

Zimbra is available both as an on-premise system… it permits relatively seamless deployment of a hybrid system in which some users are served by on-premise infrastructure and others are served by cloud providers.

- Zimbra supports best-of-breed integration with leading Unified Communications vendors, notably Cisco Systems and Mitel. This permits an organization to more seamlessly deliver UC capabilities to its users, and leverage investments it may have already made in these technologies.

- Zimbra, founded in 2003, has a long track record of innovation and offers easy integration with third party applications. This enables TCO to remain low because new capabilities can easily be integrated into the Zimbra user experience, whether used with the thick client or via the Web.