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Haarlem, North Holland's Capital City, Optimizes Its Email Storage and Ensures Compliant Email Retention with Messaging Architects' M+Archive

Background

The City of Haarlem is the capital of the province of North Holland, which, historically, was one of the most powerful of the seven provinces of the Dutch Republic. The city is located on the river Spaarne, about 20 km west of Amsterdam and near the coastal dunes. For centuries, it has been the center of the tulip bulb-growing district and for this reason bears the nickname "Bloemenstad" ("Flower City"). To ensure uninterrupted collaboration for the city's 2280 GroupWise users, the Haarlem IT department uses Novell GroupWise. Four GroupWise Post Offices handle the email traffic between the municipal employees and the public. Like with any public agency, a large part of the electronic correspondence that goes through the municipal system falls in the category of "legal documents" and as such needs to be handled and stored appropriately throughout its lifecycle management.

For the past three years, the City of Haarlem has been using Messaging Architects' M+Archive to ensure that its email is retained according to the municipal policies. The deployment of a centralised archiving solution has enabled quick and easy access to the email archives in cases of e-discovery requests. In addition, it has allowed the IT department to optimize its use of storage hardware. In short, using GroupWise with M+Archive has been a successful solution for the City of Haarlem.

Identifying the Multiple Email Archiving Requirements at the City of Haarlem

When the Haarlem's IT Department decided to deploy a centralised email archiving solution, there were several challenges related to their email system they wanted to address. One of the goals was to reduce the size of individual mailboxes and the respective GroupWise Post Offices for faster back-ups and restores.

A second requirement was the ability to provide email archives on demand in portable format. The need for portability was dictated from two sides: on the one hand, it would enable employees leaving the organisation to take their data with them; on the other hand, having a portable copy of a former employee's email would allow current employees to access it without consuming a separate license. In that sense, the archiving solution was tied in directly to fiscal accountability.

A third, equally important reason was the decision of the municipal IT department to act proactively with respect to regulations mandating archival and storage of public documents, including email. A recent study published in The Netherlands on the role of email in cases of litigation ("Email Bewijzen en Bewaren") underlines the status of public and corporate email as being equal to legal documents ("geschrift"). Thus, having a policy-based solution to manage the email archives was an important requirement that directly addressed the regulatory compliance perspective.

Finally, the email system of any government agency, such as the City of Haarlem, is also a repository of a wealth of information and knowledge about the city. Yet, no matter how vast the information, it is only of value if it can be easily accessed and retrieved. In this sense, a crucial component of the email archiving solution had to be the ability to search and find relevant messages quickly and efficiently.

Addressing the Needs of Email Lifecycle Management with M+Archive

To meet its numerous and equally important challenges with respect to email lifecycle management, Haarlem's IT Department selected Messaging Architects' M+Archive. The decision process involved the City of Haarlem's head of IT, the network administrators in charge of the GroupWise system, and TMDi, Haarlem's technology solutions provider.

Rene de Zwart, Network Administrator, talks about the factors that ruled in favor of the selection:

"When we were looking to implement centralized archiving, we wanted a solution that would not bring in additional complexity to either the IT staff or our end users. With M+Archive, employees don't need to learn to use a new application as they can access their archived data from the familiar GroupWise WebAccess interface. For the IT staff, this translates in improved productivity since we don't have to train the end users on accessing their archives nor do we have the additional overhead of maintaining additional user access rights.

"In addition, the City of Haarlem required specific security settings on its firewall that originally weren't supported by M+Archive. However, we worked together with the Messaging Architects support and development team to resolve the issues."

"Finally, we wanted a solution that would allow us to export the information out of GroupWise and store it into format that can be accessed and retrieved without any dependencies on proprietary applications."

As one of the early clients using M+Archive in The Netherlands, the City of Haarlem directly contributed to improvements made in the Dutch-language version of the product.

"With every release, M+Archive has evolved into a truly reliable and robust solution. Since we've had it running in our messaging environment, our email system has become more manageable, we are fully compliant with emerging regulations regarding email retention, and we are able to access archived records quickly and efficiently," concludes the administrator.