

MIMECAST AND MICROSOFT OFFICE PLAY NICE TOGETHER FOR LAW FIRM EMAIL MANAGEMENT

BY MICHAEL PAUL

With so many law firms today using Mimecast to manage their email, it is logical to take a hard look at how it integrates with any new platform you are evaluating. Many law firms are just now considering the move to Microsoft Office 365, but may be unsure how Mimecast and the newest Microsoft platform work together.

Mimecast is a Gartner-leading cloud-based anti-spam and archive filtering service. Emails destined for the business are filtered through the Mimecast Secure Email Gateway and cleaned prior to delivery. Mimecast offers robust compliance, e-discovery, archival and advanced cyber threat solutions with Targeted Threat Protection on its award-winning platform.

Microsoft Office 365 is a software as a service platform built for the cloud. The SaaS offering has several elements, one of the most important being hosted email and messaging services. While Microsoft offers an email filtering gateway with Office 365, we have found leveraging a third-party service such as Mimecast adds features and recommended security layers to the Office package.

With email messaging playing such a large role for communication in most law firms, it is imperative to protect users from advanced cyber threats. Mimecast policies allow for extremely granular controls when it comes to shielding users' inboxes from spam. The built-in Microsoft Office 365 filtering does not offer the same level of control as Mimecast. Targeted Threat Protection from Mimecast offers safeguards against spam originating within the firm's network, not just external email. Mimecast solutions include URL filtering, which protects users from clicking on malicious links in email; impersonation protection, which prevents whaling attacks; and attachment protection, which strips malicious attachments from emails.

With the Secure Gateway, the amount of phishing attempts, spam and other email-based hacks/viruses is greatly reduced. Every spam email caught is one less to deal with, saving end users significant time in managing their inbox. This allows the end user to get client work done instead of being distracted by unsolicited email traffic.

If the firm has strict compliance requirements around attachments and data loss prevention, Mimecast has solutions that complement Office 365. Your firm will have choices on sending attachments to external users. With Office 365, emails can be sent from the user's personal OneDrive, a one terabyte drive space that is available to Office 365 users. While this works extremely well, there is currently no way to expire the content automatically using this method. With Mimecast Large File Send, the sender can set an expiration date on the attachment. With DLP policies, both Mimecast and Office 365 can

protect against personally identifiable information, including Social Security numbers and credit card information, going outside the firm. DLP policies deployed within Mimecast will protect emails. DLP policies deployed within Office 365 can protect across the entire Office 365 suite, not just email. As with most security software, a layered approach is best.

A messaging system protected by Mimecast and backed up with Office 365 offers an enormous advantage for uptime and availability. With Mimecast's built-in archive feature set and Mobile application enabled, any outage on Microsoft Office 365 is easily mitigated. Going with Office 365-hosted email, there are some controls that the firm will have to give up, because of the nature of SaaS offerings. With Mimecast and its online inbox, any Office 365 outage doesn't have to take the entire firm offline. With the Mobile application installed on users' smartphones, users can still access their mailbox when Office 365 is down. The online inbox offers businesses of all sizes the comfort of knowing there is a failover option built into the Mimecast/Office 365 system.

Frequently, when a firm has deployed Mimecast and a move to Office 365 is being discussed, the question of retaining Mimecast comes up. We continue to advise clients to keep Mimecast for the redundancy, archive, and security gateway features that greatly enhance Office 365. Additionally, Mimecast compliance features complement Office 365. Firms having to deal with litigation holds and more complex compliance requirements can leverage Mimecast to support Office 365. With each user's mailbox archived, messages can be placed into compliance and found easier within the Mimecast portal.

As law firms consider the move to Microsoft Office 365, it is good to know Mimecast and the newest Microsoft platform not only work extremely well together but also provide a combined host of features and protections that make it a very worthwhile combined solution. The advantages to keeping Mimecast along with Office 365 are overwhelming. Expect an increase to uptime and availability of your firm's email system, reduced spam, simplified compliance utilities, data loss protection and proven protection from malicious links, whaling and phishing attacks and other harmful attachments opened by unknowing employees. The applications go far beyond playing nice together—using them provides the layered approach to securing one of your firm's primary communication vehicles.

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