



Business Solutions: Making Email More Productive—and More Secure

◆ Email: You can't live with it, and you can't live without it.

For a relatively recent business tool, email certainly plays a big role in the lives of office workers. The average business user sends and receives about 170 messages a day, says Radicati Group, a Palo Alto, Calif., research company, and can spend as much as a quarter of the day sending, reading

or deleting email.

This isn't all bad. Dashing off a quick email is a lot more satisfying than playing phone tag with a customer or co-worker. Email devices like Research In Motion's BlackBerry make even off-hours productive (even if they do annoy family and friends).

But this reliance—some say overreliance—on email causes grief for IT administrators, office workers and

their managers. Storing all those messages—along with attachments such as spreadsheets and PowerPoint slides—can quickly clog a company's servers. Finding buried information can be nearly impossible.

Email can also be used to send corporate secrets and confidential customer information, a potential security nightmare. As such, email has become a favorite target

for discovery in lawsuits. And then there's spam, which accounts for about 40% of email volume.

In this section, we look at the ways software makers are trying to make email more productive by making it easier to connect directly with other office applications—in part by recognizing that most users are comfortable in their inbox.

Another article examines

the latest in email security, which focuses on technologies that prevent sensitive information from going out—as big a problem as keeping viruses and spam from coming in.

Finally, we explore better ways to archive and retrieve information locked in email, a topic that has become more important thanks to new federal rules on electronic discovery in lawsuits.