

Product Review: MailStore Server v8.0

By J. Peter Bruzzese

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Product Homepage: <http://www.mailstore.com/en/mailstore-server.aspx>

Award: Gold Award (4.6)

Source: <http://www.msexchange.org/articles-tutorials/product-reviews/product-review-mailstore-server-v80.html>

Let me say at the outset that I've reviewed earlier versions of MailStore Server in the past and I was quite excited to see what was new with the solution. My previous review (in September of 2011) gave them a Gold Award with a rating of 4.5 out of 5. I was about to find out if they had maintained that level or even exceeded it.

Before I jump right into the feature set, let's take a step backward and review what MailStore Server is all about. MailStore is developed by MailStore Software GmbH, located in Germany's Rhine-Ruhr region. MailStore, as the name sort of implies, is all about email archive, which in our modern world is akin to regulatory compliance. MailStore is designed to be easy to deploy and easy to use. It can safely maintain any amount of data for many years.

Much has changed from what I could see in their online change log. (<http://www.mailstore.com/en/mailstore-server-changelog.aspx>) In my earlier review I worked with version 6.03 and they have had numerous releases (major and minor or incremental releases) since that time down to the modern 8.03 version. It's really worth your time to review the various new, improved and fixed announcements in the change log. Looking at the new features in version 8.0 (released in February) I could quickly see that they have wasted no time in getting their product Exchange 2013 and Outlook 2013 supported and ready. I was also pleased to see they were ready for Office 365 and had added a few other supported email systems like IceWarp. They have also enhanced all components to be available in multiple languages including (Simplified and Traditional), Czech, Dutch, English, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Slovenian, Spanish and Turkish. And they run natively as a 64-bit process (although they continue to support 32-bit platforms).

Let's look at the setup and management tools and then we can discuss more in-depth features.

Installation and Profile Configuration

Just like its predecessors, I don't think the installation could have gone any smoother. Quite simply a Next-Next-Install that installs the product and then allows you to quickly configure the service using the MailStore Server Service Configuration tool (shown in Figure 1). I could have installed it on any system including Windows XP, Vista, 7 or 8, as well as Server 2003/2008/2008 R2 and 2012. I liked that the install wizard gives you the option to Auto-configure the Windows Firewall. That takes a little stress off the plate of the administrator.

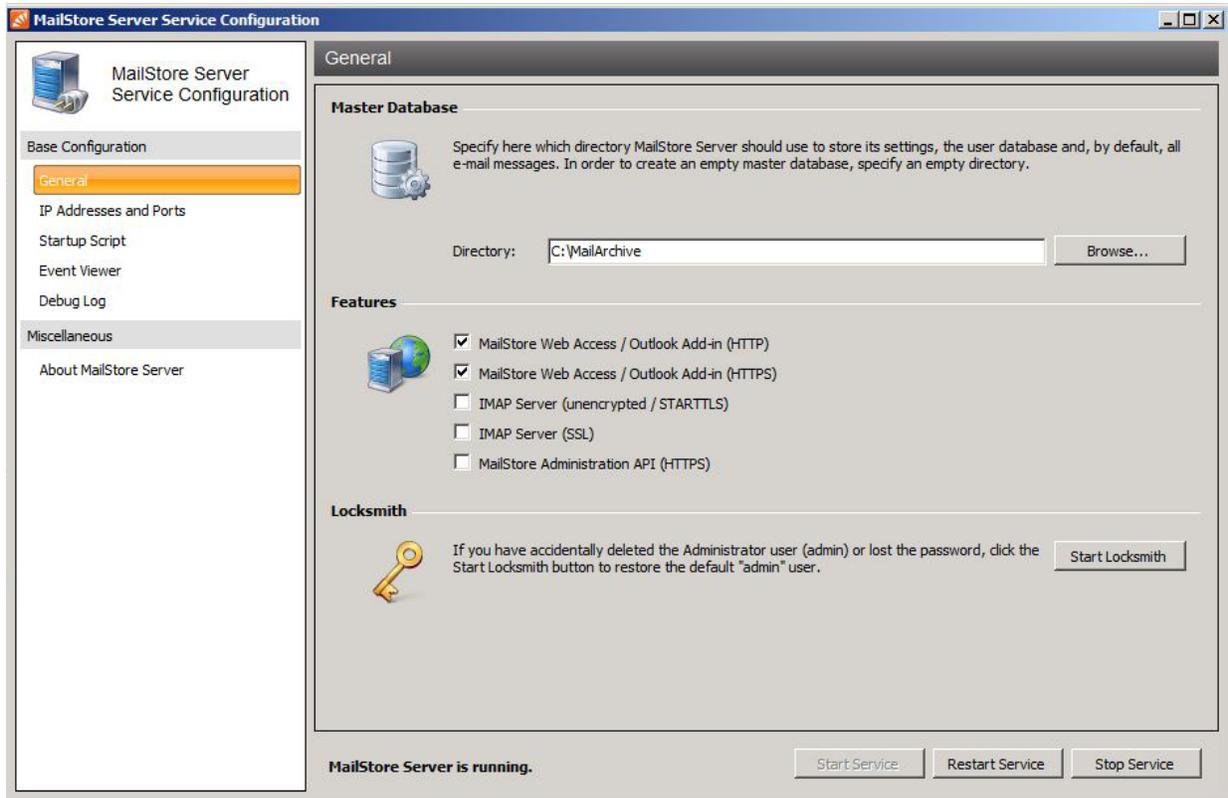


Figure 1: The MailStore Server Service Configuration tool

The server configuration doesn't require much effort. You can see initially from Figure 1 that you have to determine the location of your MailArchive and you can enable Web Access and the Outlook Add-in for HTTP or HTTPS. Or you might choose IMAP Server or enable the MailStore Administration API (HTTPS). You can use Locksmith to restore the default admin user and password if you forget the one you configure. And you can Start, Restart or Stop the service itself. All of this is on the General tab. You can see that there is also a tab to configure IP Addresses and Ports for your enabled features. You can configure a startup script (.bat file) to connect to network shares if necessary. And you also have a MailStore Event Viewer and Debug Log section.

Beyond the service itself, the MailStore Client (shown in Figure 2) is really where you'll spend most of your time configuring the features of MailStore. Everything is laid out in a hierarchical tree structure that we are already familiar with from other solutions we typically work with and this layout for MailStore is very easy to use.

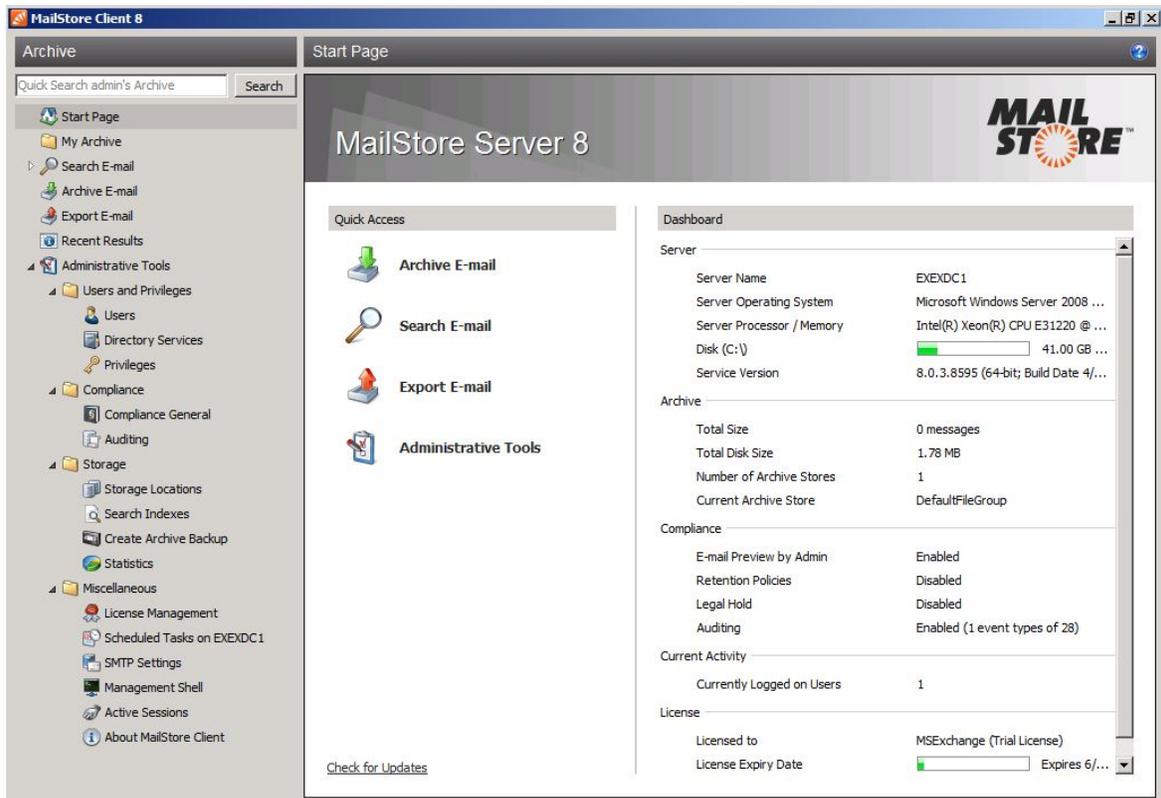


Figure 2: MailStore Client 8

I wanted to get things up and running fast. I had forgotten when I configured MailStore in the past that I need to first create a connection to Active Directory if I want to set up multiple profiles (after all, it has been a while). I jumped right into the Archive Email section (shown in Figure 3). I picked Microsoft Exchange (although you can see from the list of options that there are many other servers, clients and files to choose from with regard to configuration). I wanted to see MailStore working with Exchange 2013 with Outlook 2013 so I select Microsoft Exchange and went right for the Multiple Mailboxes option (shown in Figure 4). I was reminded of the need to sync with AD and it led me right to the Directory Services sync page. I literally did nothing but click Synchronize Now and it took care of the rest. Then I was able to go back and configure archive on multiple mailboxes.

Note: Supported email systems include the following

- Exchange Server 2003, 2007, 2010 and 2013 (including Windows Small Business Server)
- Hosted Exchange
- Microsoft Office 365
- MDAEMON Messaging Server
- IceWarp E-Mail-Server
- Kerio Connect
- Any IMAP/POP3-compatible email server
- Email clients such as Microsoft Outlook
- PST and other email file formats

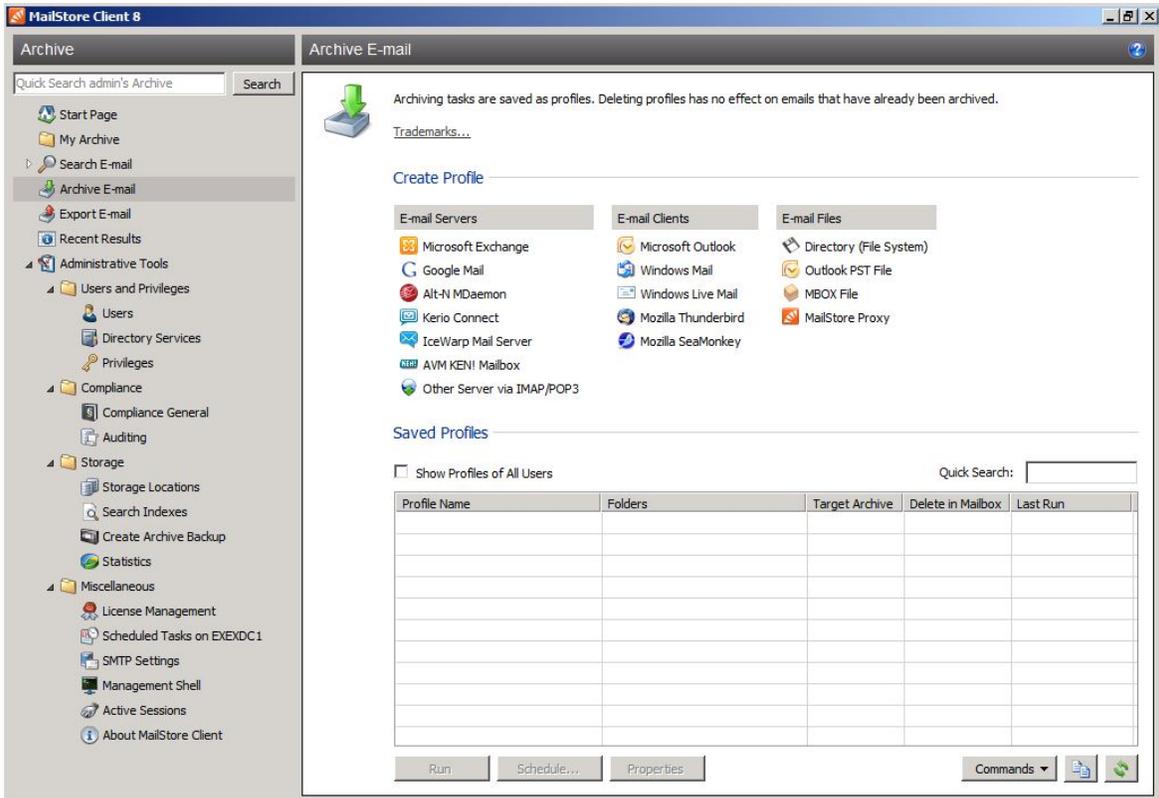


Figure 3: The Archive Email section



Figure 4: Archive Microsoft Exchange Server options

One important aspect to keep in mind if you are configuring the Host for the archive is that you need to indicate your CAS (for Exchange 2013 at least, which is what I was using to test the solution) and not your MB roles, unless they are combined on the same server, which mine were not.

The account you use to configure a Multiple Mailbox archive must have “access to all Exchange mailboxes to be archived” and it mentions, quite accurately, that “Administrators do NOT typically have those privileges.” To accomplish this you have to create a central user account for “impersonation” so that this account can access the mailboxes but this account must not be a member of any Windows or Exchange administrative group. You might find using PowerShell will help you accomplish this quickly by setting up the account and use: `New-ManagementRoleAssignment -Name"MailStore Impersonation" - Role:ApplicationImpersonation -User:serviceaccount@domain.com`

Under Advanced Settings (shown in Figure 5) you can configure the folders you want to archive and you can utilize filtering and even messaging records management with deletion settings on messages. Once you have the profile configured you can Run it immediately or put it on a schedule. Once it runs you will see it working through a progress bar on your screen and then, once complete, you can actually review the archive information directly through the MailStore Client under Other Archives. You can also perform eDiscovery through the Search E-mail settings.

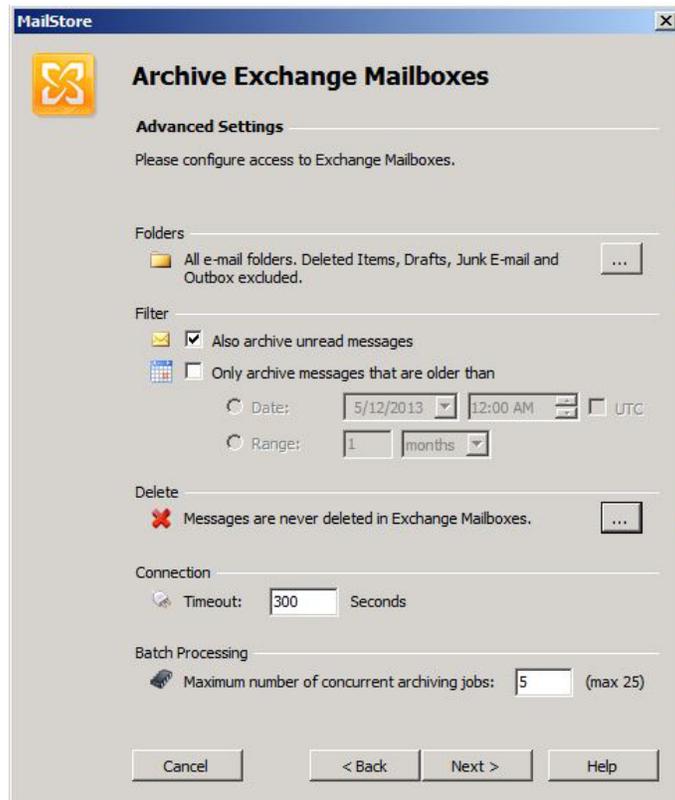


Figure 5: Advanced Settings for Exchange archive configuration

Keep in mind I just walked you through one set of options. With Exchange you can also archive public folders and you can perform journaling as well. And there are a host of other profile options to choose from. It's good to note that you also have an export feature that allows you to restore archived data. This export feature also makes migrations much easier because you can import email from one system and then export it to another system.

Features

Logically, the most important feature here is the ability to easily archive your data. And MailStore does this in a pain-free and fast manner. But it has interesting options as well. There is a Compliance option (shown in Figure 6) where you can configure several compliance options like turning on or off the ability for an administrator to preview other users' emails. You can adjust the number of years messages are retained before email can be deleted through basic retention policies. You can enable legal hold with one click to make it so that email deletion is disabled. And you can create an auditor user that will have access to all user archives for auditing purpose.

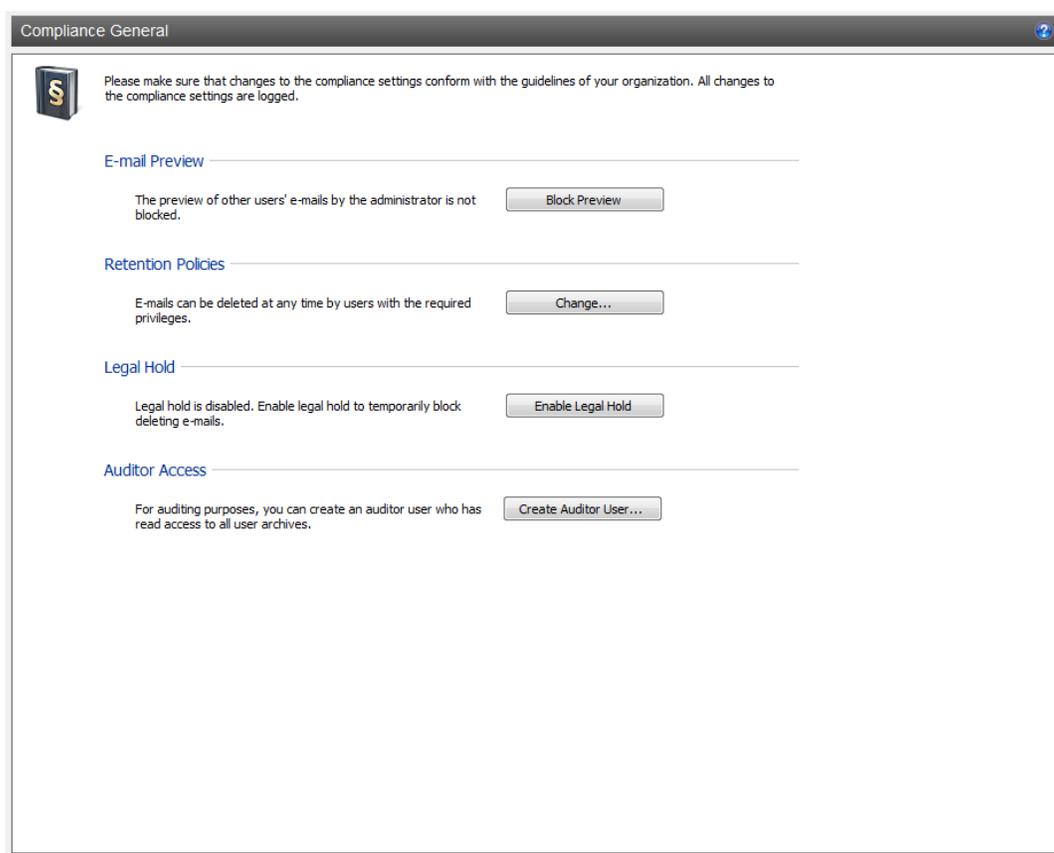


Figure 6: Compliance options

Along with archive and compliance features we also have some great storage features (with support for iSCSI, Fibre Channel, NAS and SAN) where you can see the location of your storage for your archive through the MailStore Client. You can review Search Indexes and have them rebuilt easily. MailStore can create a backup of an email archive and that can be placed on disk, USB storage and network shares (and you can use third-party backup software as well). You can also get at-a-glance stats for each archive that includes the number of messages, total size in percentage and total size in MB.

One thing to mention regarding the storage technology is that unlike Exchange, which offers a personal archive solution (which is good for getting folks off pst files in your environment but not enterprise-ready with regard to regulatory compliance for many organizations), MailStore has single instance archiving. Single Instance Storage (SIS) was removed in Exchange back with 2010 so that's good to know that when you have duplicate content it is only stored one time (with file attachment compression).

See a full list of MailStore Server Features here: <http://www.mailstore.com/en/mailstore-server-features.aspx>

Pricing and Support

You can see the pricing calculator and full price list here: <http://www.mailstore.com/en/mailstore-server-pricing.aspx> Update and Support services are included for the first year and then become optional add-ons.

From a support perspective I found the online documentation and Help to be quite good. I did get stuck with a 404 error and it took me a while to figure out the problem was an incorrect host configuration (remember what I said earlier about using the CAS and not the Mailbox server?) so I can see some room for improvement on that end. I also had difficulty finding the download for the Outlook add-on.

Final Thoughts

There are a lot of things I like about the MailStore Server. I especially like how easy it is to get it up and running and set it and forget it (like a proper archive solution should be). I appreciate the additional bells and whistles for compliance and the effort made to offer a client add-on, as well as the ability to access the MailStore through Web Access and Mobile Web Access (and not just on iOS but on Android, Windows Phone or Blackberry). It's really an all-in-one solution. I was impressed with it in the past and I'm equally pleased with it now.

The one thing that went through my mind as I worked with MailStore Server was "what if I wanted this same solid solution but wanted a cloud-based version of it?" and lo and behold the company is releasing a MailStore Cloud Edition toward year-end. I look forward to getting the chance to review that solution. If it as good as the server-based version they'll have another winner.

MSEExchange.org Rating 4.6/5



About J. Peter Bruzzese



J. Peter Bruzzese (Triple-MCSE, MCT, MCITP) an Exchange MVP, is the co-founder of ClipTraining.com, an Exchange 2010/2013 Instructor for TrainSignal.com, a well-known technical author for Que/Sams and others, a technical speaker for Techmentor, MEC and TechEd and the Enterprise Windows columnist for InfoWorld.

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