INSTANT CASE STUDY

Integrated Archiving for IBM Lotus Sametime and IBM Lotus Notes

Phoenix Contact is a worldwide leader in the development and manufacturing of electrical connection, electronic interface, and industrial automation technologies.

The company has long archived its Lotus Notes email with EMC EmailXtender; it was a natural extension, therefore, that the company would seek to archive their IM chats shortly after deploying Lotus Sametime in early 2009. The challenge, however, was to find an IM archiving solution that is integrated with EmailXtender to create a single unified archive of all electronic communications.

The Case for Archiving Electronic Communications

Phoenix Contact is ahead of the curve in their commitment to archiving all electronic communications. As IM becomes ubiquitous as a key communications medium, IM conversations join email as valuable digital assets—but only if they are preserved and (even more importantly) easily retrievable and searchable.

Many regulatory bodies (particularly the SEC and the NASD) now view IM as a form of communication that is subject to regulatory compliance requirements. In March 2003, for example, the NYSE issued a memo stating that SEC Rule 17a-4 requires the archiving of both e-mail and IMs.

Further, enterprises must be prepared for the possibility that litigants will subject IM conversations to legal discovery. On December 1, 2006, revisions to the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure (FRCP) came into effect. Rule 26 in particular governs the production of 'electronic stored evidence' (ESI) in federal court cases. ESI covers any and all information that can be stored electronically—including instant messaging conversations.

Despite these regulations, a recent survey of corporate counsel revealed that only 7% of companies are in a position to meet Rule 26 ESI requirements. Small wonder that US companies spend almost $2 billion annually on outside ESI services.

"We have 500 Lotus Domino email users for whom we archive any email that is older than 365 days to EMC EmailXtender," says Jeff Lontz, ITCA Messaging Administrator for Phoenix Contact. "We implemented Lotus Sametime about a year ago for a pilot group of 100 chat clients. As IM gained traction and became more of a daily practice at Phoenix Contact, it was decided that we should treat IM chats in the same manner as we treat email."

Mr Lontz therefore went in search of a Lotus Sametime archiving solution that could be integrated with their existing EmailXtender system.

Instant IMtegrity Archives and EMC EmailXtender

"I started to look into Lotus Sametime's native logging capabilities," says Mr Lontz, "but these capabilities were not what I had in mind. I quickly found Instant IMtegrity Archives through a Google search. IMtegrity is a straight-forward solution that met my requirements, including—to my extreme surprise—a pre-built integration with EMC EmailXtender."

Instant IMtegrity Archives provides IM archiving, search, and discovery for IBM Lotus Sametime. Instant IMtegrity Archives captures and indexes all Lotus Sametime chats, thus helping organizations meet requirements for regulatory compliance, preservation of intellectual property, and usage policy enforcement.

♦ Log and audit all Lotus Sametime conversations so you can track who said what, what was discussed, when it was discussed, and how long the discussion lasted (including inline usage of images and emoticons).

♦ Search and discover IM chats archive-wide in a central admin console to enforce internal IM usage policies, respond immediately to audits and electronic data discovery requests, and preserve intellectual property. Archive integrity is protected with secure Access Control Lists

♦ Archives are fully indexed and easily searchable—quickly search by date or by person, or do advanced searches with Boolean operations, within time frames, or over a set conversation length. You can also easily identify usage policy violations so appropriate corrective action can be taken

"I have been a Lotus Notes administrator since version 5," continues Mr Lontz. "Installing IMtegrity was extremely easy. Including a reboot, the entire installation took about 15 minutes. And since IMtegrity also integrates with EMC EmailXtender, there was no training overhead for my end users—they are already familiar with how to search for archived emails using EmailXtender's Lotus Notes plug-in."
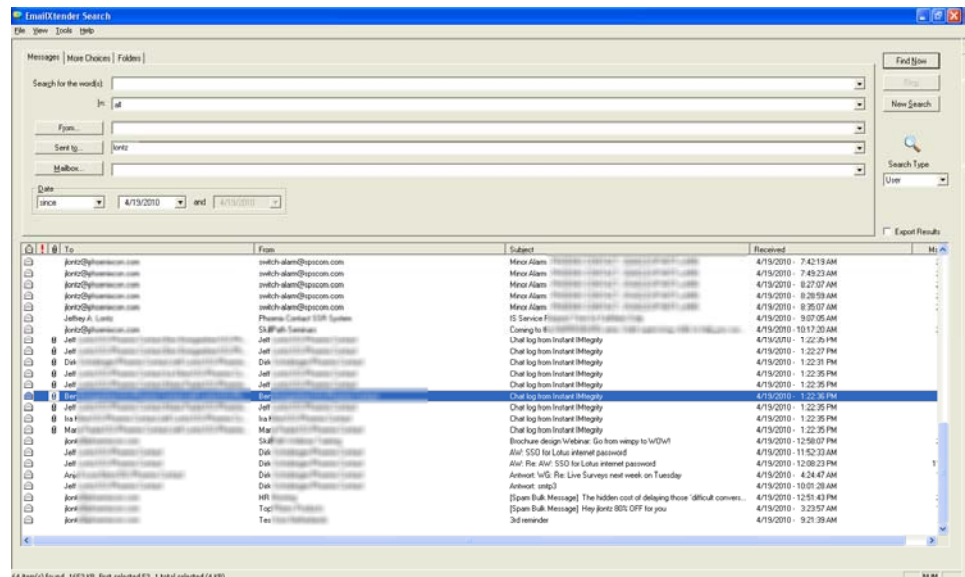

Figure 1: IMtegrity chat logs in EmailXtender search results

Lotus Sametime IM Chats Retained as Valuable Business Records

Phoenix Contact's technical service group, which provides product technical support to the company's customers, was the first group to get chat. If an agent is on the line with a customer and needs assistance from a colleague, those agents can now collaborate through Lotus Sametime and thereby avoid placing the customer on hold.

"As more of these chats occur on a daily basis," says Mr Lontz, "I am sure IMtegrity will become more valuable. IMtegrity enables us to retain our IM chats in case we need to revisit them for clarification on an issue. We can also review IM chats as a training tool on how we can improve our customer service."

Integrated Email and IM Archiving
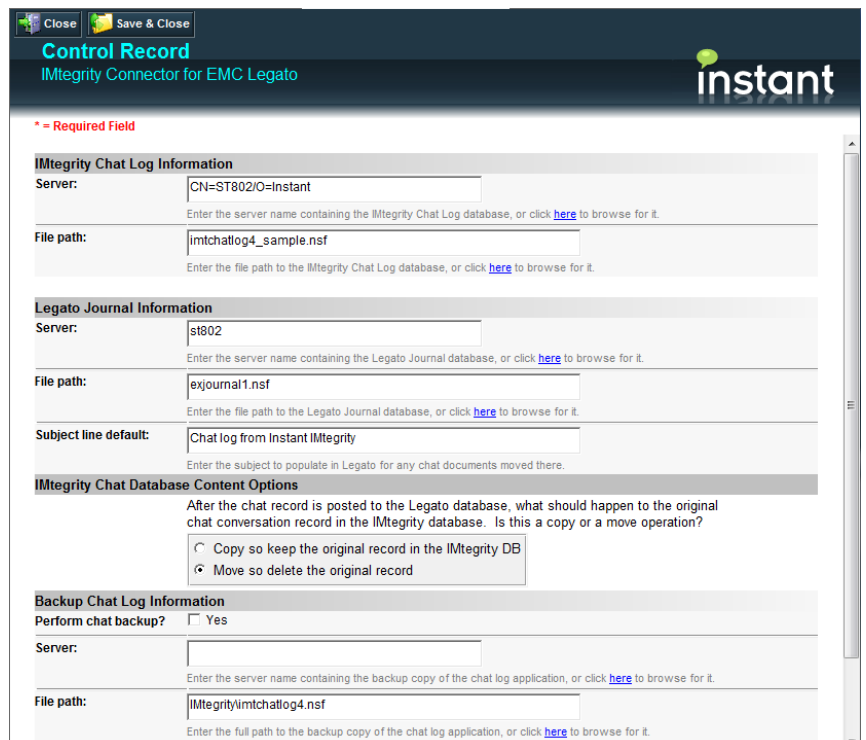
"IMtegrity's EMC connector was advertised as a selling feature, but it was not immediately apparent how to turn it on," says Mr Lontz. "And when Instant's tech support advised me, the connector did not meet my requirements."

Instant collaborated with Mr Lontz and his team and quickly produced a new framework to handle a deeper level of integration between EmailXtender and IMtegrity.

"Phoenix Contact is the first customer to deploy the connector in a production environment and it is working well," says Mr Lontz. "I can now search chats in the same manner that I search email. Records for all of our electronic communications are centralized in a single unified archive."

Mr Lontz has this to say in conclusion:

"I feel the product and support that I received were well worth the price and I look forward to working with Instant Technologies in the future."

Figure 2: Configuration of Instant IMtegrity's EmailXtender Connector

Appendix: Integrating Instant IMtegrity Archives with EMC EmailXtender

The diagram below illustrates the integration between Instant IMtegrity Archives from Instant Technologies and EmailXtender from EMC.

In this specific illustration, IMtegrity is integrated with EmailXtender via an agent within the IMtegrity database that converts the Sametime chat logs into an email format at preset intervals. A connector into EmailXtender's journal database then writes those emails into the EmailXtender archive according to defined archiving policies for in-scope users.

The result is a seamless integrated repository of all IM chats and emails.

1. Instant IMtegrity Archives captures and indexes Sametime chat logs and writes them to the archive database (IMtegritylog.nsf).

2. An agent within the IMtegrity database runs on a scheduled basis to convert the chat logs into an email format.

3. A connector into the EXjournal.nsf database writes the emails to EmailXtender according to defined archiving policies for in-scope users.

4. The STbackup.nsf database maintains a historical copy of the same emails for all in-scope users for possible future ingestion into EmailXtender. The database is renamed and moved to a file share when it reaches a pre-defined size.
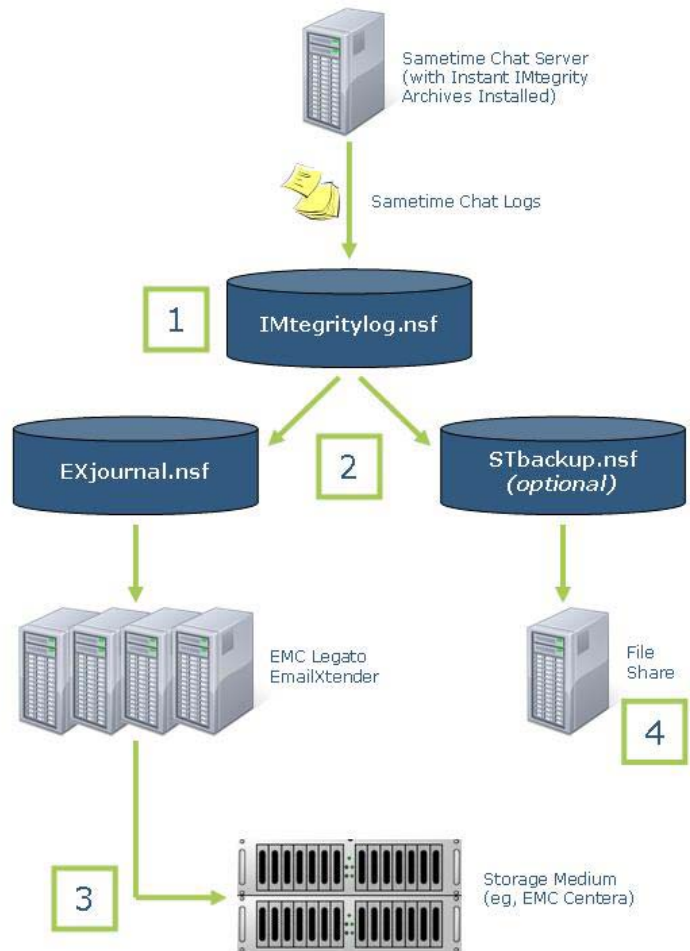
About Instant Technologies
Instant Technologies specializes in developing innovative, enterprise-class compliance and productivity solutions for IBM Lotus Sametime and Microsoft Office Communications Server, including IM archiving, IM queue management, persistent chat rooms, IM bot development, buddy list administration, and more. Instant Technologies is a Lotus Advanced Business Partner and a Microsoft Certified Partner headquartered in Durham, NH.