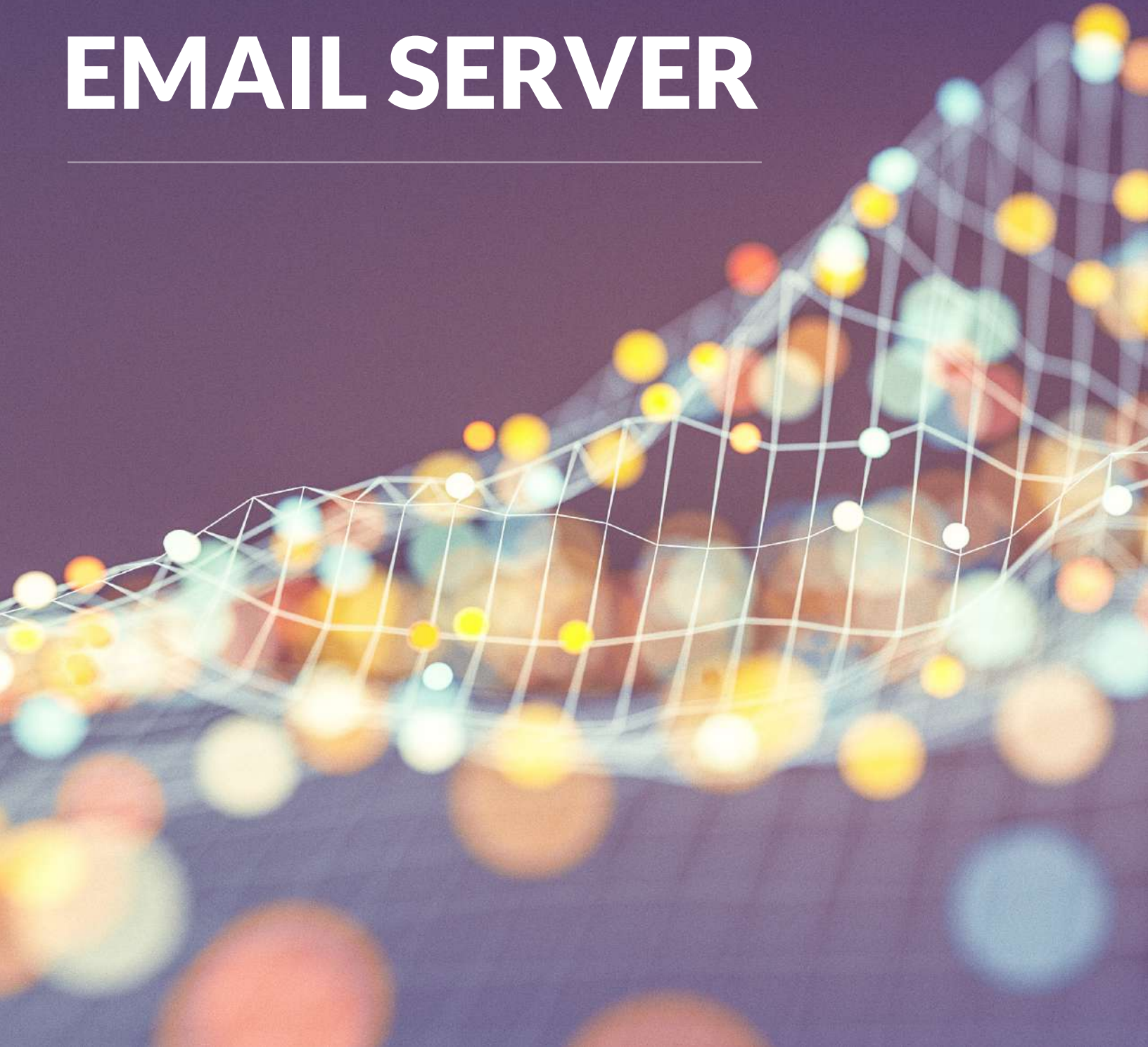

6 COSTLY MISTAKES TO AVOID WHEN SETTING UP AND MANAGING AN **EMAIL SERVER**



OVERVIEW

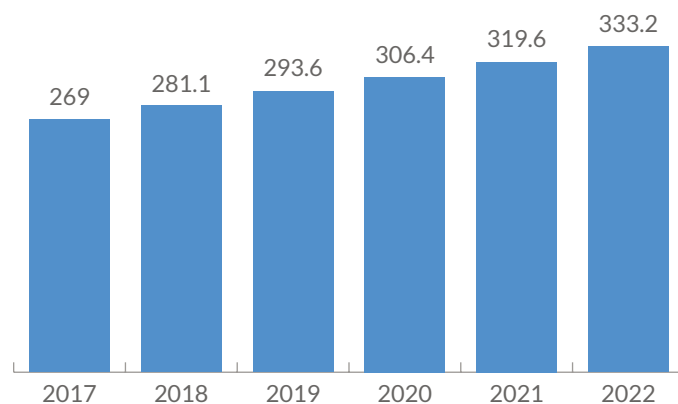


Whether you're setting up an email server for yourself, or an entire company, there's plenty of steps along the way that can lead to disaster.

Despite the growing popularity of real-time communication tools like Slack, Facebook Messenger, and WhatsApp, email still plays a key role in our lives. Email remains the go-to communication form for important messages, and there's no sign of it going away anytime soon.

In this guide, we'll outline the 6 costly mistakes to avoid when setting up and managing an email server (and how to avoid them).

Number of sent and received e-mails per day worldwide from 2017 to 2022 (in billions)



Source: The Radical Group © Statista 2018

Before we show you the mistakes to avoid, it's important to outline why running your own email server is a great option for many users. While it may seem obvious for some users to go with Gmail or Outlook for email, there's a variety of reasons why these services should be avoided.



Security

Email accounts can contain a vast wealth of personal information about ourselves that we wish to keep private. Large corporations like Google are subject to attack on a nearly daily basis. These attacks may result in compromised email data, and in situations such as the Yahoo data breach, you may not hear about your data being compromised for years. When running your own email server, you are not only a much smaller attack target, you are in total control of your account security and email retention policies.

Warning: ServerMania is committed to adhering to all applicable spam and bulk mailing legislation within each jurisdiction that we operate. We will terminate any service that does not abide by these regulations as per our Acceptable Use Agreement to ensure every mail server running on our network is not subject to unnecessary IP blacklisting.

Privacy

Large email providers often host email content on servers in the United States. If you are not located in this region, you may not wish to have your data subject to lenient privacy regulations which force companies to share your data with government and law enforcement. This is especially important if you run an organization that has data compliance concerns.

Customization

When you use an email service designed by another company, you are vastly limited in the amount of customization you can make to your email experience. Once you have setup your own email server, you are free to tweak it as you see fit. This can include things like backup policies, retention time, connection limits, and much more.

Education

More and more internet citizens browse the web each day with zero understanding about how the core services that power the internet are functioning. We think that the learning experience gained by setting up and managing your own email server is invaluable.

MISTAKE 1

CHOOSING THE WRONG SERVER TYPE



Before you begin the process of setting up an email server, you need to determine which server type to choose. The three main server types are Hybrid, Cloud, and Dedicated Servers. Each server type has benefits and drawbacks, so it's one of the most important things to get right.

Why Does it Matter?

Once an email server has been established, it is difficult to migrate to another server without a sizeable amount of work and a risk of losing messages during the process. This is because an email address is connected to a domain name, and the domain name (via the MX record) is connected to a specific server.

Once you update the MX record to a new email server, there is a period of time when messages will be delivered to the old record. This often results in having to migrate messages twice during the migration, and overall is just an unpleasant experience. It's best to avoid it at all costs by choosing the right server from the start.



Hybrid Servers

These servers combine the resources of a dedicated server with the affordability of a virtual server. A hybrid server is a slice of a dedicated server. It's great for setting up a personal email server for yourself and friends.

Who it's best for:

- Personal email hosting
- Under 100 active mailboxes
- Budget conscious users

Cloud Servers

These servers utilize hundreds of dedicated servers pooled together to deliver redundancy and scalability. The key feature of a cloud server is the ability to increase or decrease system requirements based on demand and growth. If you're not sure how large your email server may eventually grow, a cloud server is a great option.

Who it's best for:


- Personal and small business email hosting
- 100% Uptime focused clients
- Situations where resources may need to be increased or decreased over time

Dedicated Servers

These servers deliver the ultimate in server performance and reliability. Dedicated Servers are a bare metal server that is only used by a single client. This means that you will never be slowed down or impacted by other users on the server, and you are free to utilize the entire resources of the server.

Who it's best for:

- Email hosting for a business or enterprise environment
- 1000+ active mailboxes
- Instances that require isolation due to compliance considerations
- When server uptime and performance are top priority



In 1999 and 2003, Microsoft forgot to renew the domains passport.com and hotmail.co.uk, causing many Hotmail users to be unable to access their email.

At the root of every email server is a domain name. This domain, such as smith.net, allows you to create a personal email like john@smith.net or a business email like support@servermania.com to share with the world.

Domain names are not a piece of property that is indefinitely owned. It is typically sold for a period of 1 to 10 years, and must be renewed prior to expiry.

It may sound like common sense, but even with all those renewal reminders, people forget to renew their domain names every day.

If you allow your domain to expire, the domain registrar will suspend the domain and email will no longer be received in your inbox.

Always remember to renew your domain, and prepay for a couple years of renewals if you want to keep the domain for the foreseeable future.

Setting up an email server is a fairly simple process these days thanks to Mail Server In A Box and other platforms. But that doesn't mean you can just install the email server software and forget about it.

Number of compromised data records in selected data breaches as of September 2018 (in millions)



Sources: Information is Beautiful; Various sources (VizSweet); Thomson Reuters © Statista 2018

Don't Forget about the Updates

The worst thing you can do as a server administrator is forget about software and OS updates. While it is possible to setup automated package and distro updates, it's good practice to periodically login to the server to ensure these updates are being applied. It's also a good idea to review system resource usage, active users, and network connections every once in a while.

Once your email server is configured, you'll want to take some time to harden the server to close down any potential security holes.

Don't Be Afraid to Ask For Help

Any mission critical email server should be backed by a comprehensive server management team. Remember that your web host should have 24x7 support to assist you with basic issues, and should also offer a variety of server management plans to choose from.

Whether you just want your server to be remotely monitored to maintain 100% uptime, or you're looking for a team to professionally manage your server - we've got you covered. Take a look at our [server management plans](#) to keep your email server running flawlessly.

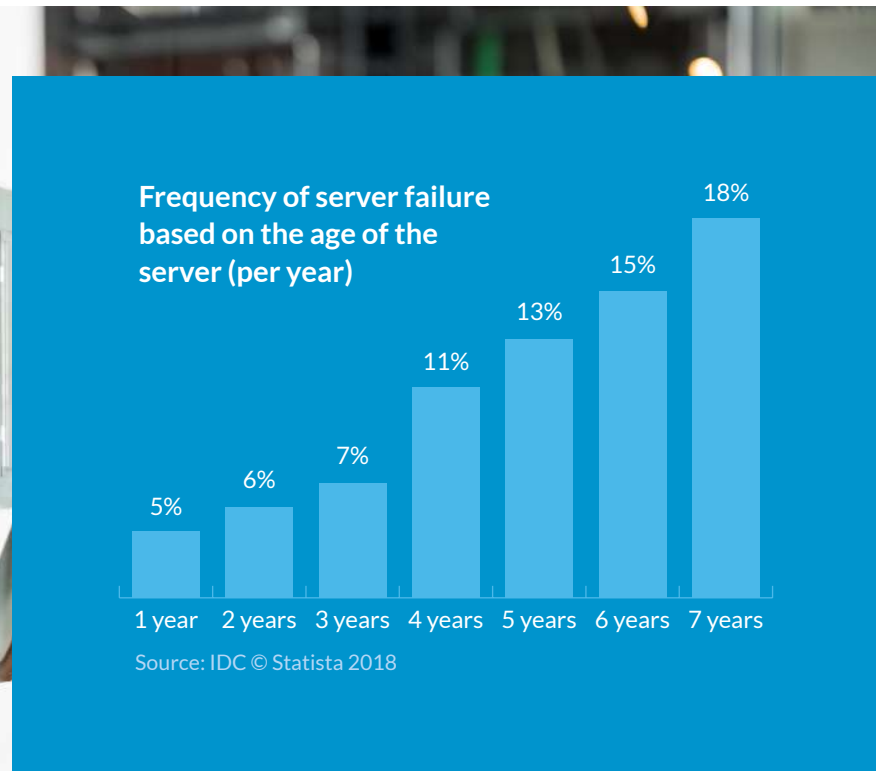
Want to learn more? Check out our article [Top 5 Ways to Secure Your Linux Server](#).

MISTAKE 4

CHOOSING THE WRONG HOSTING PROVIDER



It may seem obvious, but one of the worst mistakes when setting up an email server is choosing the cheapest hosting company. Choosing the wrong server provider will not only cost you money, but time as well.



Why does it matter?

Cheap web hosting providers make a profit by fitting as many clients as possible on a single server, by using the cheapest hardware and data centers available, and by using unskilled support workers.


The result? Virtual servers that continuously go offline and a support team that will do little to help you. This means hours of wasted time, and a costly migration to a new provider.

What to look for instead:

Look for a hosting provider that offers things like:

- 24x7 support with guaranteed response times
- 100% network uptime guarantees
- Enterprise grade hardware
- Non-oversold servers in virtual environments
- A proven track record with many years in the industry
- Affordable prices, without trying to be the cheapest option around

Nearly all of us have experienced data loss at some point in our lives. Whether it was a hard drive that failed, or a file that was accidentally deleted, failing to have sufficient backups can have a disastrous impact. Email servers are no different. They need frequent and comprehensive backups in order to maintain their integrity.

A close-up photograph of a hard drive, showing the internal platters and the read/write head assembly. The drive is partially open, revealing the internal components. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the metallic surfaces and the intricate details of the drive's mechanism.

While 57% of IT managers have a backup solution in place, 75% of them were not able to restore all of their lost data. This highlights the importance of proper configuration and testing of backup systems.

Draft a backup plan:

Consider the nature of your email server usage in order to determine how frequent and how to backup email server data. Things like:

- Do I need to be able to recover a single deleted email?
- How long after an email has been deleted do I want to be able to restore it?
- What would happen if the entire server hard drive failed or became corrupted?
- How quickly do I need to be able to recover from complete data loss?

Enterprise clients will likely want deleted email available for restoration for 14 days, with a deleted mailbox

available for complete restoration for 30 days. In the event of data loss, the server should be able to be bare-metal restored within just a few hours to maintain business operations. Personal email server clients may not require as robust a backup plan, but should have backups in place nonetheless.

ServerMania offers a wide variety of backup solutions that can have your email server automatically backed up within just a few clicks.


Take a look at our [Cloud Backup Solutions](#) for more details.

MISTAKE 6

IGNORING FUTURE GROWTH



As previously mentioned, migrating an email server is not a particularly pleasant experience. That's why it's important as you're setting up your email server to consider future growth.

An abstract digital background with glowing blue and purple lines, bars, and data points, suggesting a financial or data analysis theme. A prominent white line graph with peaks and valleys is overlaid on the scene. Various numerical values like "68.8112", "35.9%", "96.7997", and "+11,00.00" are scattered throughout the visualization.

The average email message is 75KB and the average mailbox size is 5GB.

If the server is being setup for personal use, it's unlikely that your processor and disk requirements will drastically change over time. After all, a personal mailbox that is moderately used may not use even 1GB of disk space per year.

But if the server is being setup for a company, you should take some time to review future projected growth in order to select a server that has sufficient disk space and server resources to handle new employees in the future.

IN SUMMARY

While it may seem like there are so many ways to make a mistake when setting up an email server, in reality, many of these can be easily avoided by partnering with the right hosting provider and doing your homework.

Remember:

- Start things off right with the correct server type. Book an expert server consultation for help.
- Always remember to renew your domain name, and pre-pay for a few years if you can.
- Configure automated backups and keep up with server maintenance. Hire a management team if you need help.
- Choose a server provider with years of experience and enterprise-grade hardware.
- Develop a comprehensive backup policy and test it regularly.
- Choose a server that has the amount of resources you may need in the foreseeable future.



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