



SHERPA
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Mail Attender® for Exchange Enterprise
Version 3.5x

White Paper

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Benefits	4
Product Overview	6
FAQ.....	9
Product History	14
Summary	14

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Introduction

Mail Attender for Exchange Enterprise is an administrative support tool designed to automatically manage the content of Microsoft Exchange mailboxes, public folders and Outlook Personal Storage Folders (PST's). In order to reduce storage requirements or limit legal liability, many organizations create email retention policies, only to find that enforcement is either too labor intensive or too reliant on user diligence. Mail Attender allows administrators to create custom retention policies and automatically enforce them independent of user interaction.

In today's digital world, users leverage their Exchange mailbox as a central repository for storing numerous emails and large file attachments. With the exponential growth of Exchange mailboxes, servers and storage devices are reaching their maximum thresholds. To combat the increasing storage requirements and limit Exchange server growth, administrators respond by placing quotas on the users' mailboxes. Quotas limit the Exchange server growth, however only temporarily. In response, users avoid their quota limits by moving their data from their Exchange mailbox to PST files. Originally, PST files were introduced as a way to decentralize email by allowing users to copy and archive email onto their own computers rather than relying on one central database. However, PST files have proved to be a convenient way for users to exceed their mailbox quota limits by storing their emails and file attachments in PST's.

Unfortunately, PST files consume disk space on users' hard-drives and often find their way onto file servers. Given that their growth is unchecked, PST files often cause great concern to administrators since they have tendencies to corrupt when their maximum size is approached. Additionally, organizations with strict document retention policies find it nearly impossible to locate and manage all of these files for their corporate policy practices.

Mail Attender allows content management on ever expanding mailbox and PST file growth (both on file servers and local computers) by allowing administrators to create flexible sets of rules that monitor the email infrastructure by automatically enforcing corporate policies. Once Mail Attender has detected certain conditions within the information stores, it will execute actions as defined by the administrator. These actions can range from generating quota and usage reports, to warning users of non-compliance or deleting email content. Rules can be applied universally or limited to specific users, groups, folders, files and servers.

Documents (emails, calendar entries, journal entries, contacts, etc.) represent the largest number of items in an email system. Administrators can use Mail Attender's powerful text search capability to locate documents containing combinations of keywords and phrases in their subjects, bodies or attachments. Among other criteria, documents can be located by age, keyword, size, and status. With its' content management capabilities, Mail Attender gives enterprises a way to limit legal exposure, locate critical information and move corporate knowledge off of susceptible mail servers.

Mail Attender also allows unprecedented control over attachments, which can account for up to 80% of message store capacity. Attachments can also be a great liability to a company, since they often contain sensitive information or offensive/business-inappropriate content. Mail Attender will archive attachments to a non-critical server or storage device to reduce the Exchange server load and back up time. By simplifying the enforcement of email policies, Mail Attender will mitigate legal exposure, decrease administration time and costs, secure critical information, tighten security and reclaim vital storage space.

Benefits

Reduce Legal Exposure

In today's environment of increasing litigation, every company needs to be aware of the potential for legal problems resulting from email content. Employees have filed lawsuits where a coworker has sent a single email containing material they find offensive. Companies have paid millions of dollars to settle lawsuits and avoid prolonged confrontations and embarrassment. Enforcing a corporate document retention policy is the first step in reducing these potential hazards.

If a company is ever involved in any legal action, ALL of their corporate email may be subject to discovery in court, regardless of legal relevance. The decentralized nature of PST files and the volume of emails exchanged each day, makes the process of identifying documents extremely expensive, time consuming and disruptive. Users may not even be aware that they have years of emails stored in PST files. Currently, the only way to comply with a discovery order is to manually search through each PST file, one at a time. To complicate matters, there may be thousands of messages per user in mailboxes and PST's, randomly distributed across a network. . It would be impractical or at the very least extremely expensive and time consuming to perform searches under intense, court-imposed deadlines. Mail Attender's flexible content searching capabilities can simplify your discovery process. By traversing Exchange mailboxes, public folders and PST files with customizable rules and actions, Mail Attender will provide administrators, legal teams, and human resources discovery results within hours, or even minutes.

In addition, PST files are a convenient way for users to sidestep corporate email retention policies, whether unintentionally or not. This is true because Outlook and Exchange currently have no way to centrally enforce even the simplest email policies within PST files. By U.S. Supreme Court ruling, email is the property and responsibility of the company, not the employee, thereby compelling organizations to establish document and attachment policies. Mail Attender has the ability to enforce all manner of policies as well as locate and identify potentially damaging mail messages in both mailboxes and PST files.

Tighten Security

As the alluring "I Love You" virus circled the globe in mid-2000, it caused billions of dollars in data loss and business disruption. While it helped educate users that not all attachments are safe to open, it also inspired thousands of copycat virus scripts. Mail Attender can be used to audit what types of attachments reside within mailboxes, public folders and PST files, including those PST files no longer in active use. It can then take corrective actions to eliminate potential problems.

Protect Data and Reclaim Storage Space

Disaster recovery, in the form of backups, is something companies can spend millions of dollars on each year. Personal folder storage has become a major concern to administrators. Users often have their email automatically copied from their Exchange mailbox to PST files on arrival. Outdated or unread mail, spam, automated newsletters, past calendar entries or unnecessary attachments stored in PST files may account for as much as a third of all user related storage. This not only affects network performance, but also increases backup and recovery time and increases the likelihood of file corruption. In addition, in many cases, users will only access the PST file for email usage thereby ignoring their Exchange mailbox. This ignorance can result in exponential growth of users' mailboxes. Furthermore, prior to reaching their size limitations, PST

files are still susceptible to file corruption. While Mail Attender cannot prevent users from adding items to their PST files, it can notify users and administrators when files are approaching this critical threshold, or other administrator defined criteria. By providing threshold warnings, Mail Attender can help users help themselves, by reducing the potential for data loss, not to mention reduce their inconvenience. Mail Attender will also provide automated retention policies to the users mailboxes, allowing administrators to reduce the size of the Exchange server store. This also frees valuable help desk time and spare administrators the time-consuming task of data recovery.

As the demand for more storage capacity continues to grow, it is not uncommon for large corporations to have terabytes of data within their mailboxes and PST files. Mail Attender provides a means to recover storage space by compressing attachments, eliminating unnecessary messages and attachments, enforcing age retention policies, exporting data from PST files and automating the compaction of PST files.

Product Overview

Traversing the Exchange Hierarchy

Mail Attender is an administration tool designed to manage the contents of Exchange information stores (mailboxes and public folders) and PST files. It can be used for corporate policy enforcement, search and destroy missions, limiting legal liabilities, and automating email processing. Mail Attender's ease of use and robust features make for simplified administration while reducing time and expense.

Mail Attender consists of two main components. The Mail Attender console, used to create, edit and distribute rules, and the processing engine. The processing engine has two forms. One is a service, which can be installed on your Exchange server or a completely separate machine that has Outlook installed on it. The other form is as a desktop agent which can be distributed to your users' desktop computers to allow Mail Attender to process PST files located on the computer's local hard drive.

Mail Attender stores its rules, reports and other configuration data in an SQL database. The service will periodically review the rules and their schedules to determine if any require processing.

Traversing the Exchange Hierarchy

Mail Attender treats the information stores as a hierarchy or tree that it traverses. A Mail Attender rule is a list of conditions that must be satisfied and a list of actions that will take place if the conditions are met. Each condition tests items at a certain level of the tree. For example, a mailbox size condition would reside at the mailbox level. Similarly a folder item count condition resides at the folder level. Mail Attender traverses the tree, ignoring those branches that do not meet the conditions.

For example: Assume a rule has two conditions: (1) a mailbox must be greater than 100 MB and (2) messages must be older than 180 days. Mail Attender will traverse the tree to include all Organizations, Sites, Servers, and ignore those branches where the mailboxes are less than 100 MB. It traverses those mailbox branches, including all Folders, ignoring all messages less than 180 days old. Once it finds a branch that passes all the conditions, any item along that path is subject to the actions in the rules action list. This includes any items up the branch and farther down the branch. In this example, this would include any in the Organization, Site, Server, Mailbox, Folder, Message and any attachments of the Message.

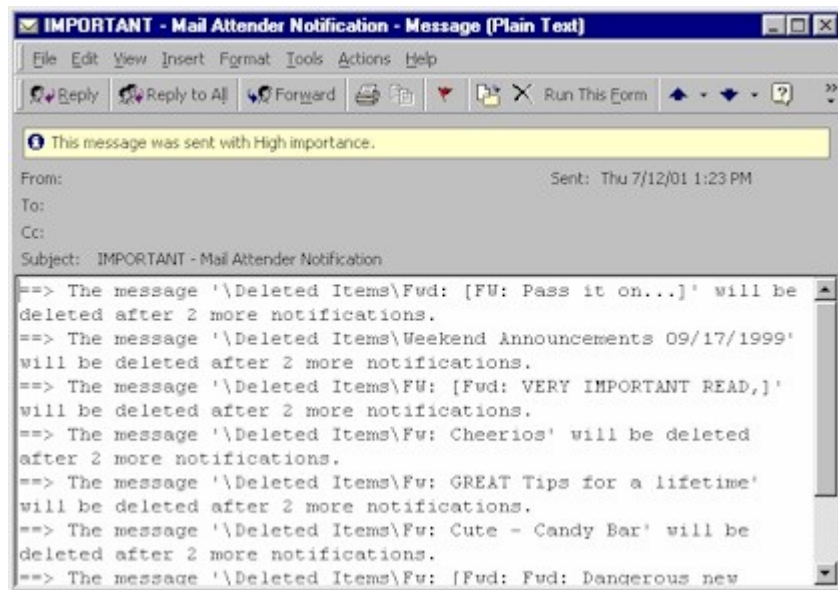
Just like conditions, actions perform work at different levels of the tree. In the above example, let's assume that the rule has two actions: (1) a folder contents report is generated and (2) any attachments be deleted. In this case, only the folders that contain messages over 180 days old are subject to the folder contents report action. Similarly, only the attachments of the messages over 180 days old are deleted. This simplifies the creation of rules and insures that only those items meeting the conditions are managed by the rule.

Warning Users Before Taking Action

In many situations, an administrator may want to provide the mailbox owner with an opportunity to do something with an item before an action is performed. For example, an administrator may want to warn each user before moving or deleting old email or attachments, which could allow the user to copy the email to their PCs hard drive before the original is deleted. Mail Attender provides multiple methods to warn users. One common method is to post a report to their mailbox

or PST file that shows which messages are subject to the policy before taking enforcement actions.

Another common method is to use the “action warnings” feature. Each action you add to a Mail Attender rule can provide users with warnings for a given period of time before executing their function. For example, you can easily configure a ‘Delete Message’ action to notify the user for a period of days before the deletion of any email takes place. Mail Attender tracks each email and determines if the allowed number of days have elapsed. Once the appropriate period of time elapses, the ‘Delete Message’ action will delete the message. If the appropriate time period has not elapsed, then a warning notification is posted to the users mailbox or PST file. If more than one notification is to be posted, they are collectively posted as one message so that users are not inundated with warning messages.

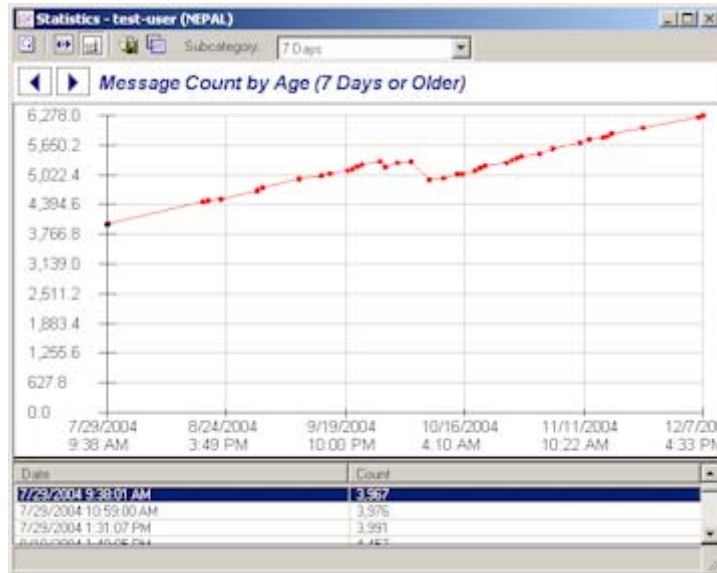


Using Dynamic Keywords

Mail Attender allows for customization of subjects, messages, warnings, paths and many other settings with "Keywords". When Mail Attender recognizes a keyword, it replaces it with the equivalent text within the context of the rule and where it is located within the store (the “and where it is in the store” part of this sentence is confusing Where what is in the store?). Each keyword has an appropriate level in the information store that allows Mail Attender to resolve its meaning. For example, the keyword [MESSAGE_SENDER] would resolve to display name of the sender of the message that the rule is currently processing.

Automatic Statistics Gatherings

Mail Attender can be configured to collect statistics automatically for each information store it accesses. These statistics are stored in the database and can be reviewed in the console. The types of statistics collected include: Store Message Count, Inbox Count, Inbox Size, Message by Age, Messages By Size, Attachments by Size, Attachments by Extension, etc. As statistics are collected over time they can paint an overall picture of your email system as well as indicate trends in your environment.



FAQ

Q. How can I use Mail Attender to reclaim space?

A. There are several ways. First, you can simply delete or export old messages and attachments. Another way is to export attachments from mailboxes and PST's to a shared network path, and leave a shortcut icon in the email where the attachment originated. This will dramatically reduce the size of each store, but of course the attachments still exist on the file system. Another way is to target large attachments or attachments that are not business related. Sometimes simply emptying a users deleted items folder will recover significant space.

Q. How can I keep an eye on information store growth?

A. The easiest way is to use Mail Attender's automated statistics gathering feature. Simply set which mailboxes and PST files you would like Mail Attender to analyze and the data is automatically collected and displayed for you. It is also possible to gather your own data using Mail Attender's reports and track your growth to get a picture of which mailboxes and folders are growing the fastest.

Q.

A.

Q. How can I use Mail Attender to limit legal exposure?

A. Legal liability comes in many forms. One of the most common is harassment in the form of offensive email content. This is nearly impossible to prevent from entering your email system. With Mail Attender, you have the ability to scan mail by sender address, keywords and phrases, attachment types and names and other ways that make it easier to locate this kind of inappropriate content. By locating content and managing the offender's mailboxes, you can significantly reduce your exposure.

Q. Can I block messages and attachments from being sent or received?

A. No, Mail Attender is not a "real-time" product. It allows you to manage the content of mailboxes and public folders, as they exist.

Q. What actually manages my Exchange and Outlook contents?

A. Mail Attender consists of two components. These are the console, which is used to create, edit and distribute rules, and the processing engine, which then apply the rules. The processing engine service uses MAPI primarily as the method of accessing your mailboxes and PST files. For the service to be able to access all mailboxes, it must have full Exchange administrative rights.

Q. On which versions of Exchange and Outlook does Mail Attender work?

A. Mail Attender works with Exchange 5.5, 2000 and 2003. Outlook 98, 2000, 2002 (XP) or 2003 is required when installing Mail Attender on a computer that is not running Exchange.

- Q.** What are the system requirements for Mail Attender?
A. The following are requirements for the console and processing engine service:

Windows 2000, XP, 2003

Dot Net Framework 1.1 (installed automatically as needed)

MDAC 2.7

Internet Explorer 5.0 or higher

Outlook 98, 2000, XP, 2003 or Exchange Server

Approx. 50MB Footprint on installation

Allocate additional space for the growth of the database

MSMQ (If synchronizing with other installations)

- Q.** What kind of load will Mail Attender put on an Exchange server?
A. That depends greatly on the server's hardware, the rule conditions and actions, the number of mailboxes being processed, etc. Most customers choose to schedule rules to run late at night when Exchange traffic is at its lowest point. Mail Attender also allows you to dynamically throttle rule processing to reduce the impact on the Exchange servers.
- Q.** Will I need to reboot my Exchange server?
A. That depends on how you deploy Mail Attender, and what DLLs are installed and in use on your Exchange server. You can manage Exchange content from a completely different computer and never have to touch your Exchange server. If you do wish to install Mail Attender on your Exchange server, you can generally expect to reboot a Windows NT 4.0 installation, but not a Windows 2000 installation.
- Q.** How are rules shared between servers?
A. Installations of Mail Attender on different computers can share their rules, reports and other configuration data via the Mail Attender Synchronization Service. This service uses Microsoft Message Queuing to share data between each installation.
- Q.** What kind of access does Mail Attender need?
A. The processing engines must have full administrative access to Exchange. NT service processing engines must run under an NT account with this access. Stand-alone processing engines running on the desktop must be logged on to an NT account with this access.
- Q.** Will I need additional licenses when installing another console and processing engine?
A. No, Mail Attender is licensed by mailbox and/or PST user, not by server.
- Q.** If Mail Attender logs into each mailbox, is there any effect on Exchange?
A. Aside from the "Last Logon Time" for that mailbox being updated, there is no other effect. Also, Exchange happily supports multiple users connected to a single mailbox. Even if a user has a message open in Outlook that is being deleted or exported by Mail Attender, Exchange will gracefully recover.
- Q.** In what format are the exported messages?
A. They are in MSG format, which is opened by Outlook. In addition, the file will also contain any attachments that existed in the original message. When Mail Attender chooses a file name for the exported message, it uses the original message subject, and replaces any characters not allowed in file names with an underscore '_'.
- Q.** When exporting attachments, what happens if a file exists with the same name?
A. Mail Attender will not overwrite any existing files. It will simply tack on a number at the end of the file name. If a file exists with that name and number, it increments the number until it finds a non-existent file name. For example: MyProject.doc, MyProject(1).doc, My

Project(2).doc and so on.

Q. Can I backup my rules and reports?

A. Yes, the rules and other configuration data are stored in an SQL database. Mail Attender ships with an Access database, which can be backed up like other files. If you intend to use a different database, you should be able to perform backups on it as allowed through standard database maintenance procedures.

Q. What if I can't remember the password of the Exchange admin account? Can I use a different account when setting up the NT service?

A. Yes, however you must make sure the NT account you choose has full access to all Exchange mailboxes that you wish to manage.

Q. What is a 'Hard' delete?

A. Exchange supports a feature that allows you to retain deleted items until they are backed up. This is a safety feature that prevents users from accidentally deleting important messages. A side effect of this is that any message deleted by an automated tool can be recovered by the user. See Microsoft Knowledgebase Article Q178630 for more details. However, when deleting messages using the Hard delete feature, Mail Attender will erase the message regardless of the "Retain deleted items" setting in Exchange. The message is gone, and can no longer be recovered by the user or even the Exchange administrator.

Q. How long will Mail Attender take to process my mailboxes, PST's or public folders?

A. That will vary dramatically with what the rule targets, how it identifies its targets, where the processing engine is installed that is applying the rule, the speed of the hardware running both the processing engine and Exchange, the size of the mailboxes, PST files or public folders being processed and many other factors. In a best case, if you were managing mailboxes and did not require traversing the mailbox subfolders, you may be able to process as fast as 2 or 3 mailboxes per second. Once you start managing folders, messages and attachments, this number will increase in proportion to the number of items in each mailbox. In a best case, you may be able to process several messages per second. If a mailbox contains thousands of messages, it may take additional time to process that mailbox.

Q. How can I reduce the time it takes to process a rule?

A. There are several ways. First, reduce the scope of a rule to only the required mailboxes and PST files and use the include/exclude folder lists effectively. Next, add conditions that will narrow the items being searched. For example, when searching for keywords or phrases, you can include a condition that limits the search to messages less than 10 days old so that only newer messages are scanned. To make this most effective, make sure the date limiting condition appears in the rule list before the content searching condition.

Another way to reduce processing time is by installing a processing engine on each Exchange server or file server. This will eliminate a lot of network traffic and speed up your processing.

As an alternative to the option above, you could add additional processing engines to the same environment and share the rule processing among those installations. This will not reduce the processing time per store, but will allow you to process many more mailboxes and PST files at the same time.

Q. How can I reduce mailbox sizes, and yet keep old messages available to the users?

A. The best way is to export old messages and attachments to a network shared drive that users have access to. This could be their NT home directory, or any other any path they can access. You can even reproduce the folder structure that exists in their mailbox. For example: \\MyServer\Users\Jdoe\Inbox\Projects\Fw_Project Schedule.msg

- Q.** Can Mail Attender manage public folder contents?
- A.** Yes, you can manage public folders exactly the same way as mailboxes and PST files. The main difference between public folders and mailboxes is simply the size of the folder hierarchy. All the rule conditions and actions are handled the same way.
- Q.** Can Mail Attender run more than one rule at a time?
- A.** Yes, Mail Attender can run multiple rules concurrently, provided they are scheduled to start at the same time (or set to process at the same time). Otherwise, subsequent rules will not process against the same store until previous rules have finished.
- Q.** We do not actually use Microsoft Exchange, but still have PST files generated from POP3 and SMTP servers and email. Will Mail Attender work with these types of PST files?
- A.** Generally, as long as your PST files are in the "standard" format that is recognized by Microsoft Outlook, Mail Attender should be able to process those files.

As for needing Exchange, Mail Attender can run without an Exchange server, however you will not be able to use some of its functionality. Specifically, you will not be able to forward content, move or copy content to public folders, or send email alerts. Regardless of whether or not you have an Exchange server, you will still need Outlook installed on the computer running Mail Attender. This is because Mail Attender requires MAPI, which is only distributed with Outlook.

- Q.** Can Mail Attender manage PST files on a Netware server?
- A.** Although you cannot install or run Mail Attender on a Novel server, if you can access the PST files from the network via a UNC path, then you can manage them with Mail Attender. Simply specify the network path you want searched, and Mail Attender will search it for files to manage.
- Q.** Can you keep users from adding content to a PST file?
- A.** You can alert them when their PST is getting too large, but you cannot stop them from adding content, short of taking away their access to the file. If you have installed the latest patches from Microsoft, Outlook itself will prevent them from adding too much content to their PST files.
- Q.** Can I warn users when their PST files are approaching their limit?
- A.** Yes, you can post a message to the PST's inbox warning the user of the danger. You can also send a warning to the administrator and generate a report that lists the files that are approaching their limit.
- Q.** Can Mail Attender stop PST files from being corrupted? Can it detect corrupted files?
- A.** There are several causes of corruption of PST files, anything from growing too large to abrupt disconnection from the PST while it is being written to. Like most databases, the internal structure of the file is what is corrupted. In most cases it may be something simple that causes messages or attachments to not be accessible. Or in some cases, major index tables are damaged, leaving the entire file inaccessible. In either case, the only way to correct it and salvage whatever content you can is by using the inbox repair in Outlook or PST scanner from Microsoft.

Mail Attender CANNOT detect this internal corruption, nor can it prevent it. In the one situation where the PST file is approaching its limit, Mail Attender can perform some kind of action that warns the owner of the PST or an administrator that the file is getting too large.

- Q.** What will the user see if Mail Attender has their file open?
- A.** Since Mail Attender uses MAPI to do its work, they will see the same thing as if two people try to access the file at the same time. Outlook 2000 returns this error:

The file Outlook.PST is in use and could not be accessed. Close any application that is using this file, and then try again.

- Q.** Does Mail Attender do anything to reduce the file size once items are deleted from it?
- A.** Personal folder files, just like Exchange databases, must be "defragmented" for deleted space to be reclaimed. Outlook calls it "compacting". Outlook automatically compacts PST files as an idle background process (Q196890). You can trigger it manually from Outlook, or use Mail Attender's automated compaction feature.
- Q.** Does Mail Attender bypass passwords placed on the PST files?
- A.** Yes, Mail Attender will bypass all passwords on PST files.
- Q.** How does the desktop agent communicate with the Mail Attender console?
- A.** Each desktop agent uses TCP/IP to communicate with whichever installation of Mail Attender you wish. From there, you would configure which rules will apply to the PST files on those desktops. Results of rule processing are transmitted to the installation and can be reviewed in the console.

Product History

Product History

Mail Attender was created to overcome the administrative limits of email systems such as Lotus Notes and Microsoft Exchange. The first release of Mail Attender for Lotus Notes was in July of 1998. Since then, subsequent releases have added many new and useful features. Mail Attender for Exchange is based primarily on the same set of features and was first released in Oct 2000. Since then, the feature set has grown along with the breadth of the product.

In Oct 2003, Mail Attender for Exchange Enterprise was first introduced. It was the first version to process mailboxes, public folders and PST files all from one console.

Release Schedule

New versions of Mail Attender for Exchange are released approximately every six months, with each version expected to contain 10 to 20 new features. In addition, intermediate versions will become available as required to fix any issues requiring more immediate attention. All new releases will be made available at the Sherpa Software website, www.sherpasoftware.com, for those customers that have active annual maintenance/support agreements.

Customer Profiles

Any company using Exchange and Outlook can use Mail Attender for Exchange. Client sizes range between companies with 25 to 50,000 mail users. In addition, many clients also use the Lotus version of Mail Attender. Please refer to our website to view a sample listing of customers.

Supported Versions

Mail Attender was designed for Exchange and Outlook. It has been tested using Exchange 5.5, 2000 and 2003 and Outlook 98, 2000, 2002 (XP) and 2003. Although Mail Attender does not require any service packs, always make sure that the latest Microsoft service packs have been applied to your Exchange server in order to minimize any anomalies.

Summary

Mail Attender is a feature-extensive product that can be used to perform many unique and necessary functions to manage your mailboxes, public folders and PST files. It was created to simplify administration tasks and give companies increased control over information residing in the corporate messaging system.

New functionality is constantly being added to Mail Attender, often as the result of customer feedback. By implementing features that our customers request, the evolution of Mail Attender will remain extremely dynamic and more powerful with each new release.

Contact Information

For additional information on Mail Attender, visit our web site www.sherpasoftware.com or call us at (800) 255-5155 or +1-412-206-0005. Sales and technical contacts are available to answer any questions you may have.