



Solution Summary

Explanation of Strategic Direction

Overview

The purpose of the Consolidated Messaging Project is to design, implement and manage a consolidated statewide messaging system that will deliver increased operational efficiencies, collaboration capabilities, cost efficiencies and cost avoidances to state agencies. A consolidated system will facilitate business continuity across state agencies, increase accessibility, improve disaster recovery capabilities and enhance emergency response communication. This project also reinforces and advances all five strategic goals in the State of Idaho's Information Technology Strategic Plan.

The initial objective of the Consolidated Messaging Team was to evaluate the various alternatives available that would provide the benefits above and recommend a specific solution for the State of Idaho. The alternatives considered were:

- Microsoft Exchange hosted by a state agency,
- Microsoft Exchange hosted by a third party and
- An open solution such as Google, etc. hosted by the vendor.

Criteria to evaluate these alternatives were identified and organized by the:

- Business requirements and benefits desired by the various agencies,
- Projected costs of each alternative, and
- Risks associated with each.

A list of typical Business Requirements was compiled from readily available literature and reviewed by the technical team members. These were supplemented by meetings at 14 state agencies representing about 11,200, or 65% of the state employees. Questionnaires were sent to all remaining agencies, and 14 responded, representing another 2700, or 16% of employees.

Costs for each alternative were projected over five years, covering the installation, conversion and operational costs. Sub-categories within hardware, software and personnel were identified and estimated.

Thirty-six potential risks were identified and organized into 5 categories (Business & Operational, Privacy & Security, Financial, Technical and Cultural). Each risk was independently evaluated and rated as "High", "Medium" or "Low" for each alternative by four core project team members.

Platform Solution

The Consolidated Messaging Executive Steering Committee recommended and the Executive Sponsor, Mike Gwartney, approved a state-hosted Microsoft Exchange solution for the State of Idaho. The following were the key considerations that impacted this solution decision:

- A solution not hosted by the state posed major risks to several agencies due to federal regulation requirements around their messaging security and storage.
- State-hosted Exchange significantly minimizes many of the risks associated with the consolidation of state agency messaging systems. Only 8% of more than 130 risk ratings were “High” for the state-hosted solution, compared to over 40% for the Open solution and almost 30% for the externally-hosted Exchange solution. A listing of all identified risks and their ratings is available on our public web-site in a spreadsheet named “Risk document.xls”.
- A state-hosted option provides the most control over business continuity, disaster recovery and other important operational issues.
- The business requirements and benefits were substantially satisfied by all three alternatives, with few differences that would provide a decisive advantage or disadvantage.
- With our current level of understanding (before architecting the final solution), the projected five-year cost differential between the state-hosted and open solution (Google) was minimal.
- The solution supports the project goals and objectives as outlined in the project charter.

Location and Management

The home for the computer equipment will be the State Controller’s Office. The other location considered was the Department of Labor. The Controller’s Office best met our decision criteria which included agency mission/statewide charter, disaster recovery and business continuity capabilities, cost modeling capability, purchasing flexibility, experience/relationships, experience hosting services and 24x7 capabilities.

The Department of Administration will be responsible for the day to day operations and management of the Consolidated Messaging Services.

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