Tecnologex

WHITEPAPER

Archiving:
An Essential Service for Business Communications

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Executive Summary:

Communications are critical for operating successful businesses. The information that employees share across the organization and acquire from clients and partners during regular contact is often an invaluable resource. However, preserving and analyzing such data can be time-consuming and costly. The timely retrieval of pertinent details from these interactions is not always straightforward.

The need for an easily accessible archive of conversations becomes even more apparent when disputes, legal issues or compliance requirements arise. A previous discussion may hold vital information that companies must access within a limited timeframe. Additionally, the use of communications channels, such as chat, text messages (SMS), voice calls, and meetings raises concerns about compliance.

Archiving introduces a solution to these challenges for companies of all sizes. The ability to retrieve past communications quickly and easily can assist with improving decision-making, resolving disputes, minimizing concerns about compliance, and assisting with litigation.

Archiving is about more than recordkeeping and compliance for industries that deal primarily with sensitive data. The winners in today's marketplace, whether regulated or not, are the organizations that can quickly leverage the information they have when it's needed.

The following discussion reviews the full spectrum of what archiving can do, how it benefits businesses, and why Archiving is the answer to an organization's communications archiving needs.

THE STATE OF THE WORLD OF ARCHIVING

Archiving might seem like just another technology that organizations may need to worry about in the future. However, capabilities that a company may delay implementing become increasingly relevant when they affect a business's regular operations.

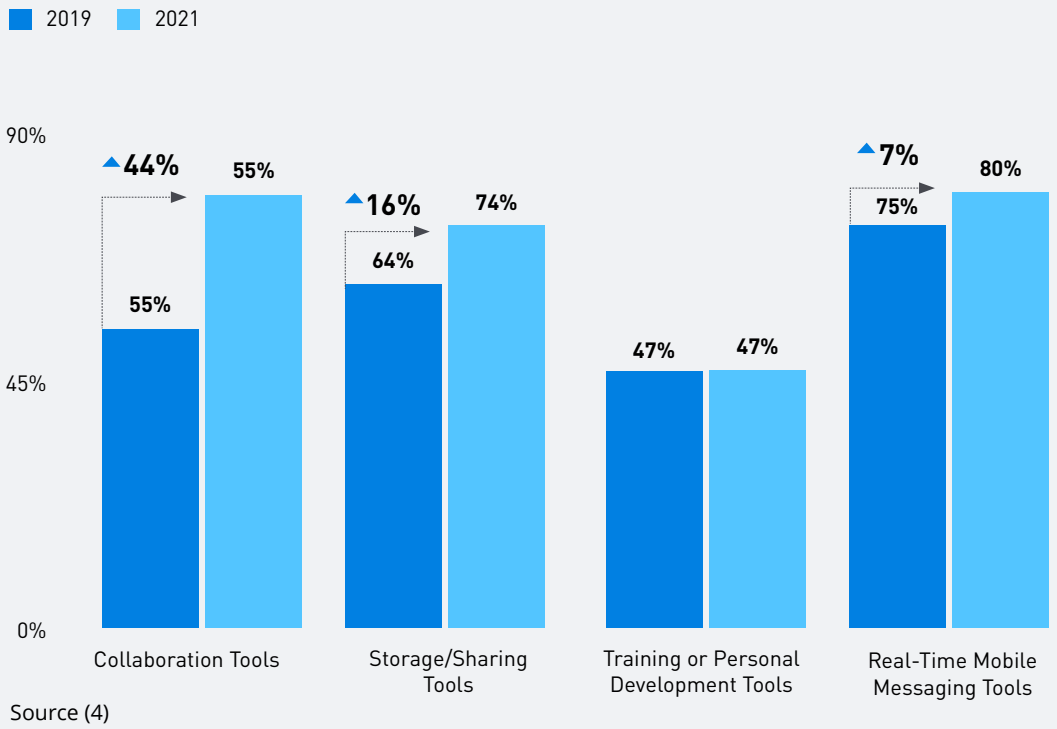
Leveraging the Power of Communications

Advances in communications have altered the way companies do business. Today, crucial deals and essential interactions no longer require in-person discussions and physical signatures. Digital correspondence permits companies, clients, and partners to handle interactions quickly from any location, even with a mobile device.

Simply connecting with others to do business is not enough to harness the full capabilities of digital communications. How an organization captures and retains those interactions can have significant benefits or ramifications.

Communicating across multiple channels causes the amount of information a business has to increase exponentially, making the matter more urgent. The World Economic Forum published an article that surmises people will generate 175 trillion gigabytes of data annually by 2025. This figure is a fivefold increase over 2018.[(1)] Much of that material will come from business communications.

Failing to securely retain an organization's communications creates an issue that can become a major problem sooner or later. The struggle lies in the capability to securely store the data and efficiently retrieve it.



Source (4)

The Growing Value of Archiving

To retain and retrieve vital communications, organizations must turn to secure archiving. This trend is fully on the upswing. Companies that are not yet paying attention to this solution should take notice.

For example, **82%** of IT decision-makers have either implemented or reviewed audio recording capabilities to assure compliance and network security.[2] Such recordings become a pressing matter for businesses that employ remote workers to interact with customers.

> *"**35%** of enterprise customers will archive workstream collaboration and meeting solutions for nonregulated requirements by 2025."[3]*

By 2025, **35%** of companies with over 100 employees or generating over **$25** million in annual revenues will be archiving meeting and conversational workspace chat solutions. This number represents more than seven times the number of companies that did so in 2021.[3]

In the same time span, **45%** of regulated enterprise companies will supervise video and audio content to meet compliance requirements, a fourfold increase. This data is consistent with the reports of a 44% rise in the use of corporate collaborative tools in recent years.[4]

Organizations will likely find it impractical and undesirable to limit how employees communicate as they adopt Unified Communications as a Service (UCaaS) solutions that permit secure conversations. The addition of archiving is necessary for ease of access to the conversations that occur using these platforms.

Compliance with Government Regulations
Companies have other motivations to consider archiving. In 2022, the United States Securities and Exchange Commission exacted $1.2 billion in penalties against 17 firms.[5] What was the reason? These companies did not preserve work-related text messages from the personal devices of their employees.

Penalties for non-compliant retention policies are quickly becoming a matter of concern for many organizations. In particular, companies operating in financial, healthcare, legal and other sectors need to comply with industry regulations such as FINRA, MiFID II, and HIPAA, to name a few.

WHY ORGANIZATIONS SHOULD CONSIDER ARCHIVING

Companies should consider how many pain points they could resolve with better access to the information in their business communications. The ability to make informed decisions and resolve disputes often depends on the quality, quantity, and accessibility of data.

Continuity

An organization can experience changes in staff at any given moment, whether team members depart temporarily or permanently. Relying on employees to upload information means there is the possibility of forgetting a communication stream or accidental or intentional deletions.
An archiving solution that automatically captures and retains business-related interactions means the information is safe from tampering or deletion. As team transitions occur, supervisors can easily access necessary details and provide them to incoming employees.

Digital data is no more indestructible than physical documents. Fortunately, a digital archiving solution that integrates with a UCaaS platform offers tamper-proof storage and security so that data stays safe.

Regulatory Compliance

Certain industries have specific compliance requirements related to data storage and retention. Challenges can also occur when enforcing an organization's own internal governance policy.[6] Compliance is an important consideration for the financial, healthcare, and legal industries, among others. Organizations operating within any of these sectors should regularly review whether their current archiving method supports their compliance programs.

Failure to comply with industry regulations can open the business up to a host of actions and fines. As commerce has become more global, where a company does business can put it under the laws of that region's government. Most areas now require adherence to some standard for acquiring, processing, and storing personal data.

Legal Protection

The possibility of litigation is a reality of doing business. Secure communications archiving can be a critical asset to a defense team.

By following tightly controlled protocols, SMS, voice calls, meetings and chats may become reliable evidence. An archiving solution makes such information easier and less costly to retrieve.

A robust archiving solution will help meet the preceding concerns. Companies need a solution that can handle these situations and is easy to deploy and operate.

TYPICAL USE CASES

Another way to understand the value of archiving is to consider true-to-life use cases where this service addresses a business's needs. Archiving will benefit a company in areas of productivity, compliance, and legal considerations.

Productivity
Archiving assists with productivity in line-of-business functions such as sales, customer oversight, and workforce change management.

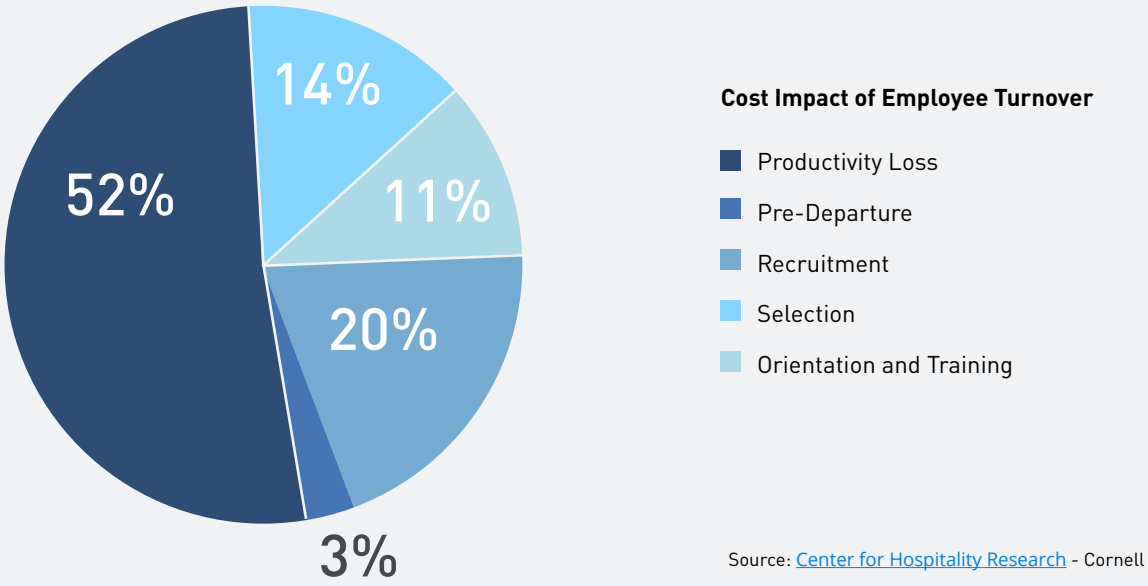
Sales and Customer Oversight
Managers and supervisors are able to gain an enhanced view of their teams with archiving. This insight leads to better training and improved results from employees.

For example, a salesperson may have low productivity despite making the requisite number of voice calls. Their supervisor could ensure the rep is using the sales script by referencing the call archives. Reviewing the record of conversations may highlight key areas where the rep deviates or misses opportunities

Another potential situation involves verifying orders. Errors create time-consuming and costly returns and shipping charges. Worse yet are the upset customers who begin to view a company as incompetent or uncaring. A review of the archives can isolate the root of the issue and problematic patterns.

Customer disputes are another area that companies and their clients want to resolve as soon as possible. Say a manager receives a complaint about a customer-facing employee. The employee may tell a different story than the customer.

Is this a cantankerous client, or is the rep in need of additional training? The manager does not have to rely on word of mouth. A review of calls, chats, and SMS messages over the previous few months can reveal the details of the interactions and help the manager determine whether further training is in order for the rep. If on the other hand the employee responded appropriately, the organization can take other actions to manage the customer.



Source: Center for Hospitality Research - Cornell

Workforce Change Management

Managing workforce changes is another area where archiving can help enhance productivity. When an employee changes roles or leaves the organization, the productivity loss can be substantial.

When employees leave the company or step out temporarily for reasons such as health or family concerns, the ability to retrieve conversations with clients allows leadership to bring new hires or backfills up to speed quickly.

For example, picture a customer success agent who has helped various clients on particularly complex issues. A challenge for the business arises when this agent has to go on family leave and a customer that the agent assisted calls in for help, following up on a previous problem.
The customer success lead now handling the case does not have to guess or sort through reams of disorganized information to understand the customer journey. Archiving makes finding the right conversations with keyword searches simple.

The team leader can understand the scope of the situation and assign the customer to another qualified agent. The background is enough to bring the new agent up to speed, which better serves the customer.

Companies must also contend with the loss of customers that occurs when sales personnel move on to other roles. Robust data collection and storage means a new rep can pick up where their predecessor left off and maintain the relationship. Such continuity creates a favorable view of the organization as having a vested interest in the client's success.

Compliance

When archiving fulfills industry rules, compliance becomes less of a headache. A business may have to produce relevant communication data as the law demands.

For example, the Department of Justice now expects more companies to preserve documentation and maintain proper storage procedures.[7,8] Their concern is about preventing corporations from shielding misconduct.

A business could find itself in the legal crosshairs when a party it does business with gets into legal trouble. Investors or partners may face accusations of impropriety, and the government could come calling for data from tangential associates.

Organizations in regulated industries should have archiving in place before it's needed or risk finding themselves facing the consequences of non-compliance.

Legal and Human Resources

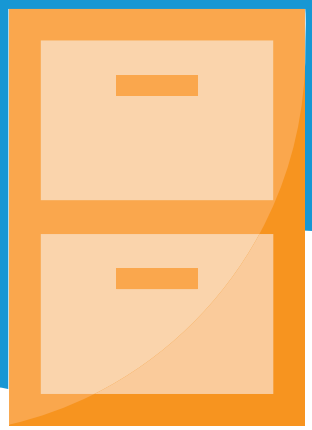
All businesses must prepare for the possibility of litigation. When a case arises, the discovery of evidence and investigation becomes more straightforward with archiving.

Holds on information for discovery are simple since administrators can quickly change how long the system retains information. Workflows and reviews become more efficient, reducing the hours and investment in discovery.

Human resource departments also benefit from archiving features of a UCaaS solution. Leadership can review interactions and settle disputes quickly with objective documentation of a situation.

Consider this possible scenario: A job candidate calls the HR manager and states that the final offer letter differs from the original proposal the person received verbally. The HR manager can quickly check the archive to review the interactions in question and make the correct adjustment.

The benefits of archiving touch multiple area of a company's activities.



OVERVIEW OF ARCHIVING

What does archiving involve? Communications archiving entails accurately capturing and safely storing digital conversations. Such data may come from chats, voice calls, meetings and SMS texts from mobile devices.

As with other storage technologies, the safest and most versatile form of archiving is via cloud technologies and off-premises data centers. Online capabilities allow administrators to access the needed information from any location.

What does archiving look like in practice? As an example, companies regularly communicate with employees, customers, and partners through voice calls. One party may share critical information during an exchange. Then a situation or opportunity arises where the business needs access to the specifics of the conversation.

With archiving, authorized users can easily search the captured data to find the discussion in question and review the interaction. Confirming the facts or referencing vital information is easy and fast.

Data archiving is the process of preserving data for long-term storage, typically for regulatory, legal, or compliance purposes. Below are some key principles and common concerns that arise when discussing data archiving. Any legitimate solution must address these points:

DATA INTEGRITY

Archived data must be stored in a way that preserves its integrity and authenticity over time. This may involve measures such as checksum validation, encryption, and secure storage systems.

DATA RETENTION

Archived data is typically retained for extended periods of time, often measured in years, based on legal, regulatory, or business requirements, and policies and procedures may be implemented for managing data retention and disposal. In many cases, the retention period is dictated by regulatory requirements, such as 7 years for FINRA or 10 years for Medicare.

ACCESSIBILITY

Archived data should be accessible and retrievable when needed, either for review or for legal or regulatory purposes. This may involve implementing search and retrieval systems and processes.

SECURITY

Security is extremely important in data archiving as the archived data may contain sensitive or confidential information that must be protected from unauthorized access, modification, tampering or theft. The consequences of a security breach involving archived data can be significant, including loss of trust, legal liabilities, and financial penalties.

To ensure archived data is appropriately secure, essential measures, such as encryption, access controls, and audit trails should be implemented:

- **Encryption in transit and at rest** - As cyberattacks and hacking activity become more prevalent, it is crucial that archiving and discovery solutions are able to protect data both in transit and at rest using strong encryption standards.
- **User access and permissioning** - Role-based access control (RBAC) is an approach to restricting system access to authorized users and defining what a user identity is allowed to "see and do". Having the ability to decide who in an organization can have access to and see the communication data is critical.
- **Full audit logs** - All actions must be logged, from who accessed the archives, what was searched and when these activities took place.

These measures should be in place throughout the entire data archiving process, from the time the data is transferred to the archive to the time it is accessed and retrieved.

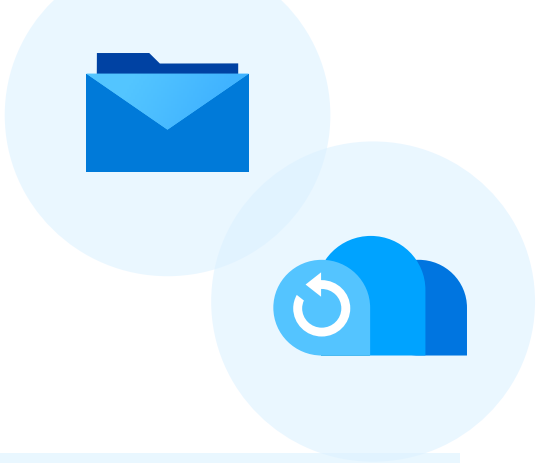
Security is a critical aspect of data archiving, and organizations must take the necessary steps to protect archived data from unauthorized access and ensure its confidentiality, integrity, and availability over time.

Compliance and Data Residency

Depending on the industry (financial, healthcare or legal), strict regulatory compliance requirements may be in place related to the retention and storage of data. Some common examples of industry regulations include FINRA, HIPAA, and MiFID II. These regulations may also specify that the data be stored in a way that allows easy access and retrieval in a timely manner with some requiring WORM (Write Once, Read Many) tamper-proof media storage that complies with SEC Rule 17a-4.

An archiving solution needs to meet the relevant industry-specific concerns. Whether a business faces issues with financial, medical, legal, or governmental regulations, the platform should help support regulatory compliance programs.

Another issue related to compliance is where data physically resides. Authorities vary in their restrictions, and most countries do not want the personal information of their citizens stored in a nation with less stringent privacy laws or under an administration that might try to seize those communications.[9]



HOW ARCHIVING WORKS

Archiving is a cost-effective, user-friendly, and comprehensive solution for communications archiving needs. With this service, a company gains the following benefits:

- **Automated data capture:** The archiving solution seamlessly integrates with Elevate's UCaaS platform and automatically captures chat, SMS, voice data and meetings without administrative or user action for continual data retention.
- **Quick contextual search:** Users can access millions of files and refine searches by using dozens of properties for results in seconds.
- **Unlimited capacity:** Companies do not have to calculate storage requirements, because Archiving has no limits on space.*
- **General regulations and compliance:** With Archiving, a virtual record is readily available, making audits in regulated industries less stressful.
- **Identity and access management:** Role based access ensures control over authorized personnel who can search and retrieve archived communications.
- **Data residency:** Addresses data residency requirements by storing a company's data locally or wherever the local government permits, supporting flexible deployments with data centers in US, Canadian and European locations.
- **Legal response:** When a company needs to share data with a third party, retrieval and exporting are straightforward, and the information is easily accessible. Legal holds can be applied to override retention periods and ensure data is retained to support legal case workflow and export of all case documents.
- **Archiving** offers peace of mind to businesses that need reliable access to records of past communications.

*Subject to the Fair Use limitations set forth in the Elevate Archiving Product Schedule available at: https://www.Elevate.com/legal

AN ARCHIVING PROVIDER CHECKLIST

As an organization considers which company to use for archiving, answers to these critical questions can determine which solution is the best choice.

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS FOR ARCHIVING
What types of content are captured by the archiving solution?	Since Archiving is integrated, users can capture Elevate voice, meetings, chat, and SMS interactions automatically.
Is data stored in original formats and in context?	Archiving stores data in its original format. It also permits exporting for use in situations where information needs to be shared with a 3rd party, such as in legal disputes.
Does the archiving solution provide rapid advanced searches?	Archiving allows the indexing of content and metadata, permitting contextual searches across millions of files using dozens of attributes in seconds. The solution supports search and retrieval across all captured channels with many parameters within those communications.
Is identity mapping possible?	Individual users' communications sit in their respective channels for easy access, so a company can locate different types of voice, meetings, chat and SMS interactions by a specific employee in one search. Users can be followed across different channels, by associating their channels user IDs with the users themselves.
Is data in the archiving solution secure?	With Archiving, all data is encrypted at rest and in transit, and multifactor authentication protects data from access by unauthorized users. Other security features include: • User access and permissioning - Role-based access control (RBAC) restricts system access to authorized users and defines what a user identity is allowed to "see and do". This enables an organization to decide who can have access to and see the communication data. • Full audit logs - All actions are logged, from who accessed the archives, what was searched and when these activities took place.
Is a retention period available that addresses the organization's need?	Archiving allows organizations to store data for as long as the business case requires – with retention options of one, three, seven or 10 years, and anything in between.
Will an administrator need to estimate and manage the storage required?	Archiving cloud-hosted capabilities allow organizations to have access to unlimited capacity so there's no need to estimate the level of activity or make adjustments as the amount of data grows.*
How difficult is it to purchase and deploy the archiving solution?	Integration with Elevate means archiving capabilities deploy in minutes with everything needed to enable compliant retention for chat, SMS, voice calls and meetings.
Does the archiving solution address data residency requirements?	Archiving supports flexible deployments with data centers in US, Canadian and European locations.
Is it compliant with industry regulations?	Archiving supports HIPAA, FINRA and MiFID II compliance programs with optional WORM tamper-proof media storage to comply with SEC Rule 17a-4.

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THE ULTIMATE ANSWER IS ARCHIVING FOR ELEVATE

Organizations must be able to find information when they need it, regardless of where it sits. As voice, meetings, SMS, and chat usage continues to grow for businesses, accessing details from these communications is increasingly important.

Leverage an archiving solution that meets compliance requirements, permits powerful search capabilities, and is integrated with Elevate.

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