

Bartle & Gibson deploy Zentyal for a fully integrated mail solution

In their quest for an integrated mail solution, Bartle & Gibson learnt that Zentyal came with everything they needed, offering mail, contacts and calendars synced across all the devices of their 500 employees.

The challenge

Bartle & Gibson had been looking for an easy-to-use mail solution that would allow their employees to have mail, contacts and calendars synced across all their devices. After initial testing they opted for Zentyal because the system handled the expected loads effectively, the software under Zentyal was well known and documented, they found Zentyal GUI easy to use, native compatibility with Microsoft AD helped to simplify the administration and last but not least, Zentyal provided multiple ways to have synchronized calendars, one of the principal user requirements.

Before switching to Zentyal, Bartle & Gibson were using another open source mail solution that had failed to meet their needs. One of the biggest inconveniences was that they were obliged to run a separate webmail program and updates would sometimes break the configuration and refuse the communication between the two systems. Moreover, neither program supported calendars so they had another piece of software for file and calendar syncing, but as it was a CalDAV server, plug-ins were required in MS Outlook and set up on iOS was complicated for users. In addition, mail queuing was a huge issue.

Another important challenge that Bartle & Gibson were facing with the previous solution was that large amounts of time were required to manage the system.

The solution

Bartle & Gibson deployed Zentyal on a single server, on a virtual machine with 6 cores and 32GB RAM, 500GB system disk. The mail resides on a 500GB NFS mount. Before deploying to production they tested Zentyal for a month. One of

the main questions was to make sure that queuing wouldn't cause any problems so they stress tested the server, sending thousands of messages at once to see what it took to slow the system down. The system responded effectively and they concluded that they could push an average day's mail load through the mail server in about 15 seconds.

Naturally, the new mail solution also needed to address end users' requirements: messages read on their phones had to show as read in Outlook, they wanted to enter calendar entries or email folders once on either phone or Outlook and have them shown on both places, contacts had to sync and there needed to be a way to access their mail from a PC outside the WAN. Thanks to Zentyal's SOGo webmail and ActiveSync integration, all these user requirements were met.

In addition, some very specific configurations were done outside the Zentyal GUI. Postfix was set to deny messages from Bartle & Gibson's domain that did not originate on their mail server and a non-standard SMTP port was opened for users who were on networks that blocked standard ports. AmavisD-new was set to block multiple attachment types, quarantine them to a specific address and notify the user about the blocked message. Mail folder sharing was enabled in the webmail and Let's Encrypt SSL certificate was used for ActiveSync, GUI and webmail.

The experience

For Bartle and Gibson, Zentyal Server's best feature has been without any doubt the integration of everything.



"The Zentyal integrated LDAP server simplifies things in a few innocuous but very time saving ways. Honestly, that is my favourite feature. I hate having to do repetitive things manually."

Jonathan Bowerman
IT Specialist
Bartle and Gibson

This makes possible to avoid having to do repetitive things manually - it simplifies the system administration, helps to avoid errors and provides important time savings.

From user point of view, their users are thrilled to have their mail, contacts and calendars synced across all their devices. As they put it "*It sounds like another innocuous thing, but when a user has to enter the same data in several places mistakes crop up and getting a customer's phone number wrong, or entering the wrong time for a meeting can and did cost money*".

In the future, Bartle and Gibson are planning to retire one of their dated and expensive servers and use Zentyal Server also for roaming profiles on their Windows PCs, to provide DNS and DHCP services for their network.



About Bartle and Gibson

Now Western Canada's premier plumbing, heating, and electrical distributor, Bartle & Gibson was founded by two Canadian businessmen who wanted to focus on relationships with customers and suppliers. In 1944 Charlie Bartle of Victoria, BC, and Cecil Gibson of Vancouver, BC, each started a store in their respective city, and Bartle & Gibson opened its doors for the first time.

1951 marked the company's first expansion, with a branch opening in Edmonton, Alberta. Over the next 20 years Charlie and Cecil would see their business expand to cover most of Western Canada, including Calgary, Yellowknife, and Surrey. A service expansion in 1983 added electrical products to the distribution portfolio.

Today Bartle & Gibson consists of 30 branches spread throughout Western Canada, which are supplied by 3 main distribution points. Their continued growth and expansion is due in no small part to their dedication to provide exceptional service to all our clients, suppliers, and employees. They continue to be the privately owned, 100% Canadian organization that their customers have come to trust since 1944.

About Zentyal

Zentyal designs and develops the Zentyal Linux Small Business Server since 2004. Zentyal Server incorporates all the network services required in a small and medium business environment, most importantly the first-ever native Microsoft Active Directory® implementation on Linux that is easy to use.

With Zentyal Server there is no need to use command line, but system administrators can manage all the network services via graphical user interface. Zentyal-based solutions allow SMBs to reduce and rationalize IT investments, improve the security and minimize system downtime.