Managed File Transfer: Securing the Way Organizations Deliver Files

Executive Summary

The evolving regulatory and business environment has changed the way that organizations look at data protection and file transfers. Regulatory compliance is essential and auditors are much more sensitive to the risks associated with uncontrolled file movements.

In addition, business files have gotten larger thanks to images, video, and "big data." Yet, the need to share these files has also grown due to globalization and geographically distributed teams.

Relying on legacy file transfer solutions like FTP and email is no longer the answer. These approaches don't meet the efficiency and security requirements that businesses have today. More and more organizations are turning to managed file transfer or MFT applications.

Usage of these solutions is on the rise, especially in financial services, healthcare, and state and federal government.

As organizations evaluate managed file transfer solutions, they should consider five key areas of functionality: administration and governance, architecture, core features, visibility, and quality of service. Attunity Managed File Transfer ('RepliWeb MFT') is uniquely engineered to address organizations' file transfer needs. Read on to learn how the product has been used successfully by organizations in several different industry segments and in a variety of different use cases.

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Relying on FTP and email is no longer the answer for file transfer needs. These approaches are inefficient and can result in regulatory non-compliance. Usage of managed file transfer or MFT applications is on the rise, especially in financial services, healthcare, and the state and federal government. Robust solutions, like Attunity's Managed File Transfer ('RepliWeb MFT'), are easy to administer, provide a secure architecture, and offer visibility into the status of file transfers via an intuitive user-interface.

Transferring Files Securely is a Real Challenge for Businesses Today

The evolving regulatory and business environment has changed the way organizations look at data protection and file transfers. Data privacy legislation worldwide means that sensitive data must be protected at all times. For example:

- Publicly traded companies must comply with the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 and the Basel II Accords of 2004.
- In the European Union, organizations must comply with the Data Protection Directive which regulates the processing of personal data.
- Healthcare organizations in the United States must comply with both the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), as well as the HITECH (Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health) Act which took effect in February 2010. The HITECH Act requires business associates to conform to the same data security standards for protected health information that healthcare providers are held to under HIPAA.

In light of these regulations, auditing firms have become sensitized to the risks associated with uncontrolled file movements in an organization. When auditors perform reviews today, this is a key focus area.

Not only is legal compliance essential, companies must also guard against the reputation and brand risks associated with high visibility security failures. Attacks by hacker groups like WikiLeaks and Anonymous are public relations nightmares for organizations.

In addition, large files are now commonplace in the business world. Digitized image and video files are often very large, and "big data" means big files. With globalization, distributed work teams must share information and transfer these large files efficiently and securely with colleagues within the organization as well as with external partners. As IT teams struggle to do more with less, complex or resource intensive file transfer solutions simply aren't acceptable.

Legacy File Transfer Solutions Are Not the Answer

Many organizations still rely on legacy file transfer solutions like FTP and email. However, these don't meet the efficiency and security requirements that exist today.

Since plain FTP has limited means for encrypting information, data can be accessed easily by digital "eavesdroppers." In addition, files placed on FTP servers remain there until they are manually deleted. IT teams must continually monitor and scrub shared FTP folders to prevent sensitive data from being stolen or misused. Individuals sending files have almost no way to verify if their file transfers are complete and file recipients cannot confirm the integrity of the files they receive.

In addition to the security problems, FTP is non-intuitive for non-technical end users. This results in numerous calls to the IT help desk. FTP burdens IT resources with these calls for assistance, as well as with the management of temporary accounts for external users and maintenance of FTP folders.

Email transfer is similarly problematic. Large business files are not well suited for email systems. Most email gateways are configured to restrict attachment sizes and even attachments of an acceptable size can put an unnecessary strain on the IT infrastructure. In organizations that require email archiving, storing large file attachments can rapidly increase storage requirements. In addition, email does not allow auditing.

The Solution: Managed File Transfer (MFT) Applications

To solve the problems associated with legacy file transfer solutions, more and more organizations are adopting managed file transfer or MFT applications. Usage of these solutions is on the rise, especially in financial services, healthcare, and the state and federal government. MFT products are viewed as one of the most promising ways to enhance business interactions.

A global Forrester survey asked 300 senior IT managers to rank business issues that drive their need for improved interactions with trading partners. The majority of respondents (82%) rated the need to exchange documents electronically as most important. Other important issues included new requirements related to compliance or risk management (74%) and increased complexity of external interactions (63%). When asked what the organization's highest priority for planned improvement was, the vast majority of survey respondents (81%) indicated that they wanted to add or enhance managed file transfer options. [1]

Organizations use file transfer to meet many different business requirements. Before companies explore specific managed file transfer solutions, however, they should analyze their file transfer needs. There are four common types of file transfers that organizations often encounter:

1. Ad hoc file transfers

These are spontaneous, typically one-off file transfers to customers or partners. Ad hoc deliveries may be invoked by business applications, such as large batch deliveries of marketing materials or regulatory filings to a database of users. Ad hoc deliveries may also be initiated by registered MFT system users. For example, after engaging in a discussion with a partner or collaborator, a business user may need to send a large file for single instance use to maintain a project's momentum. Many organizations find that user-driven, ad hoc collaboration with customers, vendors, and remote team members is on the rise.

2. Regularly scheduled file transfers

These file transfers occur repeatedly. For instance, daily transaction records may need to be sent from distributed locations to headquarters, or log files may need to be backed up once per day.

3. Human-to-human file transfers

With this type of file transfer, an individual sender transfers a file to a specific individual.

4. Machine-to-machine transfers

In this case, a file transfer is started by a process and is received automatically by another process. No direct human initiation is required for machine-to-machine file transfers.

When evaluating managed file transfer solutions, Forrester recommends that companies examine five key areas of functionality: administration and governance, architecture, core features, visibility, and quality of service. [2]

• **Administration and Governance**

When considering the governance features of a file transfer solution, organizations must consider which data security features are provided and how robust the auditing capabilities are for file transfers. Other areas to evaluate include profile and policy management. Profile management functionality allows administrators to define authorized users, targets, and data sources. Policy management, on the other hand, enables security policies to be defined at levels as granular as each individual file transfer. Certification management may also be needed to support administration of digital certificates for external partners.

• **Architecture**

Managed file transfer solutions may use a variety of different deployment models, ranging from on-premise, to software-as-a-service (SaaS), to a blended approach which uses aspects of both the on-premise and SaaS models. Integration into existing systems, such as Active Directory, LDAP, access control databases, email systems, and key applications such as workload management, job scheduling, and system management, is also important.

• **Core features**

A good managed file transfer solution will support several different protocols, such as FTPS, SFTP, and HTTPS. Other core features that help streamline file transfers include the ability to schedule transfers based on time of day or on specific process flows.

[1] Market Overview: Managed File Transfer Solutions. Forrester. July 11, 2011.
[2] "Closing the Compliance Gap in File Exchange." SAPinsider Webinar. November 2, 2011.

Workflow functionality can assist administrators as they manage pre- and post-processing requirements, divide or aggregate files, or configure custom process flows. If an organization deals with file transfers that are time sensitive, it may want a managed file transfer product that tracks the service levels of those transfers. With mobile devices becoming more and more prevalent, the ability to initiate and approve file transfer from a smartphone or tablet may be desirable.

One of the key benefits of managed file transfer solutions is the visibility they provide. Good products allow both business end users and IT staff to monitor the status of file transfers. Robust solutions also provide alerts if problems arise with a transfer, as well as logging of key events and reporting.

- **Quality of Service**

Access to the managed file transfer environment must be controlled via secure passwords and access to information must also be controlled. The best managed file transfer products are easy to use for anyone who needs to transfer a file, not just technical staff.

- **Visibility**

To guarantee reliable file transfers, products should offer checkpoint restart functionality, delta transfers, automatic retry after transmission failure, guaranteed file delivery, and notification of failed deliveries. Other questions include scalability and performance. Key considerations are how many files can be sent in a single operation, automatic data compression, and acceleration capabilities.

Success Stories: How Attunity Can Help

Attunity Managed File Transfer ('RepliWeb MFT') is uniquely designed to address organizations' file transfer needs. The following five examples illustrate how companies in different industry segments and with different use cases have implemented Attunity MFT with great success.

Industry:	**Healthcare**
Use Case:	**User-to-User and Machine-to-Machine File Transfers to Support Regulatory Compliance with HITECH Requirements**

The St. Paul Group provides data management and processing services to the Maryland Health Services Cost Review Commission (HSCRC). One of the mission-critical projects that St. Paul's manages is the monthly collection, processing, and analysis of over one million patient case records from 55 hospitals throughout Maryland.

Historically, Data Administrators at each of the hospitals would burn raw data to CDs and DVDs. These would be shipped via registered courier to the St. Paul datacenter where staff would manually load and analyze the data. The amount of human capital required to deliver the physical media often reached 120 hours each month. As the volume of data increased and the HITECH security standards were implemented, St. Paul decided to look for a faster, more efficient, and secure solution. To meet these requirements, St. Paul needed an MFT solution with strong security and auditing capabilities, as well as a system that could be used with disparate systems and by staff with varying capabilities and backgrounds.

St. Paul selected Attunity MFT ('RepliWeb MFT') software to handle both ad hoc and automated digital file collection and redistribution for the HSCRC project. The organization was impressed with Attunity's robust security and auditing capabilities, ease of management, usability, and low total cost of ownership.

"Attunity MFT enables us to meet HITECH standards for handling highly confidential healthcare information, while also accelerating our data collection processes. Our customers and partners absolutely love the simple, intuitive Web interface and the reliability that Attunity MFT provides."

– Fred Levinsky, CEO, The St. Paul Group

Customers can now submit and receive large data sets in minutes, rather than days. Given Attunity MFT's strong encryption standards and full audit trail on every transfer, St. Paul now has a highly reliable electronic file transfer platform that meets their strict quality of service and compliance-driven security and auditing mandates.

Industry:	**Government/Transportation**
Use Case:	**Ad hoc File Transfers - Handling Government Transactions in a Secure & User-Friendly Manner**

One of the largest State Transportation Agencies in the United States supports over twelve thousand users who exchange an average of 30 to 40GB of large (20MB+) data files on a monthly basis. Individual packages may reach 6GB in size and often include CAD drawings, high resolution images, RFPs, contracts, and other essential documents. To transfer these files between internal staff and external entities like business partners, contractors, engineers, and other government agencies, the Transportation Agency had been using legacy email and FTP-driven file transfer processes.

As the Agency migrated to a hosted email infrastructure, a strict 20MB limit on email attachments was imposed. Consequently, using email for file transfers was no longer a reasonable solution. Although the Agency had an FTP site, the IT department realized that the manual work required to provision and manage thousands of additional FTP users would be neither efficient nor scalable. In addition, FTP solutions would not provide adequate authentication, encryption, or auditing necessary for exchanging sensitive documents like contracts, bids, and detailed schematics for public works. As a result, the Agency set out to find a reliable, secure, and user friendly alternative.

After completing an extensive internal research and testing cycle and reviewing analyst reports, the Agency selected Attunity MFT ('RepliWeb MFT'). The stand-out features for the organization were the centralized administration and

intuitive interface. Users quickly adopted the Web user interface. In addition, the automated provisioning and package expiration features routinely save the IT department significant administration and support hours every month.

Industry:	**Media/Entertainment**
Use Case:	**Human-to-Human File Transfers - Streamlining Operations in the Media Industry**

Active Interest Media Group (AIM) publishes market-leading magazines and websites, produces category-leading DVDs and books, and organizes conferences, consumer shows, and seminars. To support the creation and management of these digital assets, AIM's staff exchanges several hundred large, high-quality graphics and media files with freelancers and other external partners every month.

"FTP was a bear to support; Attunity MFT has taken that administrative burden off our shoulders. It saves my team five to ten hours a week!"

– Nelson Saenz, Director of IT, Active Interest Media

Historically, AIM relied on FTP for outbound file exchanges. As throughput increased to over 600 media files per month; however, the shortcomings of FTP become evident. Provisioning new users was difficult and time-consuming, the individual sites and subdirectories required ongoing manual clean up, and essential reporting features were lacking. External users also had difficulty with unwieldy FTP clients, creating a steady volume of helpdesk calls and support issues. All of these factors put a significant strain on AIM's IT staff. As a result, AIM decided to look for a managed file transfer solution that would improve day-to-day operations, accelerate file transfer, and improve business and IT productivity.

Active Interest Media evaluated a number of commercial MFT solutions and selected Attunity MFT ('RepliWeb MFT') as its next generation platform. The company was particularly impressed with Attunity MFT's unique provisioning features. From almost day one of the implementation, administrators, internal business users, and external partners realized immediate benefits. IT could provision and manage users effortlessly using Attunity MFT's ad hoc user creation or Active Directory synchronization. All users now fall under IT governance, with fully configurable send/receive restrictions. In addition, Attunity MFT's guaranteed delivery and recoverable transfer features have ensured that critical files arrive on time and intact. AIM's creative teams appreciate the speed in which file transfers occur, the near elimination of transfer failures, and the ability to track and confirm that files were received by the intended recipients. Active Interest Media now supports over 500 internal and external Attunity MFT users, utilizing approximately half of the resources that were previously required to manage FTP.

Industry:	**Consumer Products**
Use Case:	**Human-to-Human File Transfers - Increasing Marketing Productivity at Iovate**

Iovate, a global leader in the research, development, and marketing of sports nutritional supplements, advertises its products via the web, television commercials, and across a broad spectrum of health, fitness, and sports magazines. Historically, the company relied on internally managed FTP accounts and vendor FTP sites to exchange advertising files. However, managing FTP processes consumed precious marketing and IT resources, delivered poor transfer completion results, and offered no audit or confirmation that files were actually delivered.

"Attunity MFT delivers five-figure annual cost savings and productivity gains for our marketing and IT teams. Immediate ROI only took a few months!"

– Jeff Beith, Mac Support Specialist, Iovate

Since advertising deadlines are relentless and have little margin for error, Iovate selected Attunity MFT ('RepliWeb MFT') to address their production file transfer needs. Attunity MFT has allowed Iovate's IT department to step out of

the equation. The design teams can react and publish creative materials faster, resulting in a significant competitive advantage for the company.

Industry:　　　　　　**Financial Services**

Use Case:　　　　　　**Machine-to-Machine File Transfers – Improving Security and Productivity at Grow Financial Credit Union**

Grow Financial Credit Union serves members across the greater Tampa Bay region. It has 18 branch offices and manages nearly $2 billion in assets. To support operations, the organization regularly transferred information to external partners, delivered data for statement printing, downloaded daily reports from Visa, and transferred files internally between Unix and Windows systems. Its processes for these transfers were largely manual and used several FTP client software installations. These were difficult to track and audit. In addition, they created issues related to data consistency and compliance reporting. IT resources had to manage notifications and communications among the parties and users babysat some processes at all hours of the day and night.

"Attunity MFT saves us approximately 20 hours per month and it eliminates the need for employees to download files after business hours."

– James Stock, AVP Network Services, Grow Financial Credit Union

Attunity MFT ('RepliWeb MFT') now provides Grow Financial Credit Union with a single solution which automates all transfer processes and provides notifications to all parties. Data consistency and reliability is now guaranteed and auditable. By eliminating the FTP client software solutions, Grow has improved its network security and reduced its software costs. Employees and the IT team both have more time to devote to productive work. Users no longer have to search and download their own files and IT doesn't have to answer support calls.

As all the shared success stories illustrate, Managed File Transfer technology has many uses and provides numerous benefits. Across industries, Attunity MFT has added significant value to organizations worldwide and is leading the pack in ease-of-use while providing lowest TCO. Attunity MFT is able to increase organizations' productivity; reduce IT resource allocations (time and cost); and increase user satisfaction. Attunity MFT is the proven choice of leaders.

About Attunity

Attunity is a leading provider of data management software solutions that enable access, management, sharing and distribution of data, including Big Data, across heterogeneous enterprise platforms, organizations, and the cloud. Our software solutions include data replication, data flow management, test data management, change data capture (CDC), data connectivity, enterprise file replication (EFR), managed-file-transfer (MFT), data warehouse automation, data usage analytics, and cloud data delivery.

Attunity has supplied innovative software solutions to its enterprise-class customers for nearly 20 years and has successful deployments at thousands of organizations worldwide. Attunity provides software directly and indirectly through a number of partners such as Microsoft, Oracle, IBM and HP. Headquartered in Boston, Attunity serves its customers via offices in North America, Europe, and Asia Pacific and through a network of local partners. For more information, visit http://www.attunity.com or our In Tune blog and join our community on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube.

Over 2,000 companies, including half of the Fortune 500, trust Attunity solutions.

Attunity exclusively focuses on getting the right data to the right place at the right time. The company engineers high-performance data management solutions that are fast to deploy and easy to operate, empowering enterprises to simply and cost-effectively ensure business-critical information is accessible and manageable when, where and how it's needed to become a more agile, intelligent enterprise.

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