

Storage Anywhere and Everywhere

Dealing with the challenges
of data fragmentation



The shape of the IT landscape has been evolving over the years and continues to do so. Gone are the days when one or two central systems could meet all of the organization's IT needs. We now have more departmental applications, collaboration and sharing environments, and even cloud-based services in the mix, with access via desktops, laptops, tablets and smartphones that can each store data in their own right. Against this background, are we in danger of losing control of our business information?

Key Points

Information-related requirements and expectations continue to rise

A recent study of 300 mid-sized organizations across the USA and UK highlighted how much access to good information matters to the modern business, and how critical it is to protect the data that's important to us. In specific terms, the majority report an increasing emphasis on better exploiting information for decision-making purposes, with a corresponding focus on collaboration facilities, anytime, anywhere access, and measures to secure and manage information more effectively.

But data fragmentation makes it harder to exploit information, as well as creating additional risk

In addition to IT-managed systems, so called 'Shadow IT' means a significant amount of data is now stored under the control of departments and workgroups. Individual users then hold data locally on PCs and mobile devices (including personal equipment), and in consumer cloud services. Difficulties finding what's needed, conflicting versions of the truth, visibility and compliance issues, and the anguish caused by loss or leakage of unprotected data all stem from the way in which storage has become fragmented.

The most prominent consequence of data fragmentation, however, is elevated cost and overhead

Most study participants say fragmentation translates directly to wasted storage capacity due to repeated over-provisioning, multiple copies of data driving up storage volumes and costs, and a significant amount of additional overhead to manage the complexity. With this in mind, the overwhelming majority (4 out of 5 respondents) recognize the problem or danger of storage costs running out of control.

Cloud storage is part of both the problem and the solution

The risk of uncontrolled use of public cloud services aggravating data fragmentation challenges and risks is acknowledged by most, with concern about this being as high as BYOD. However, many also believe that more structured adoption of cloud storage is a good way of achieving consolidation without sacrificing the pervasive access and convenience craved by users. The principle of cloud-based archives is also broadly appreciated as a way of managing historical data more efficiently and effectively.

Elite performers light the way to effective, safe and efficient use of business information

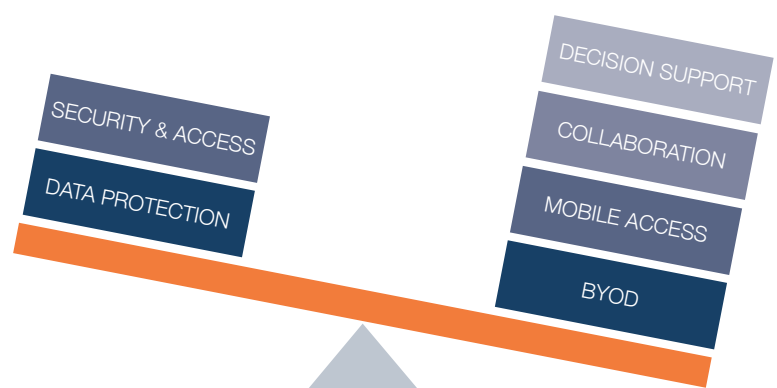
Within our study sample, 39 Elite performers (a small but significant group) provide valuable insights into how best to deal with the challenges. They highlight the importance of knowing your data and defining clear policies around the storage, retention and protection by information type. This in turn allows investment in technology, services and processes to be prioritized objectively, and the Elite place a big emphasis on exploiting cloud options here. However, the need to educate business stakeholders on the value and risk aspects of better data management, as well as cost, also comes through very strongly.

The study summarized in the document was designed, executed and interpreted independently by Freeform Dynamics Ltd. Data was gathered via in-depth telephone interviews with 300 respondents from SMBs or Small Enterprises across the USA and UK. A full report presenting a more at in-depth view and discussion of the findings is available separately.

Study sponsored by Mimecast.

Demands are escalating

On the one hand, we see a strong desire among users to make better use of information, including historical data, and to exploit modern collaboration facilities and mobile technology. On the other hand, business stakeholders want assurance that critical and sensitive information is properly protected.

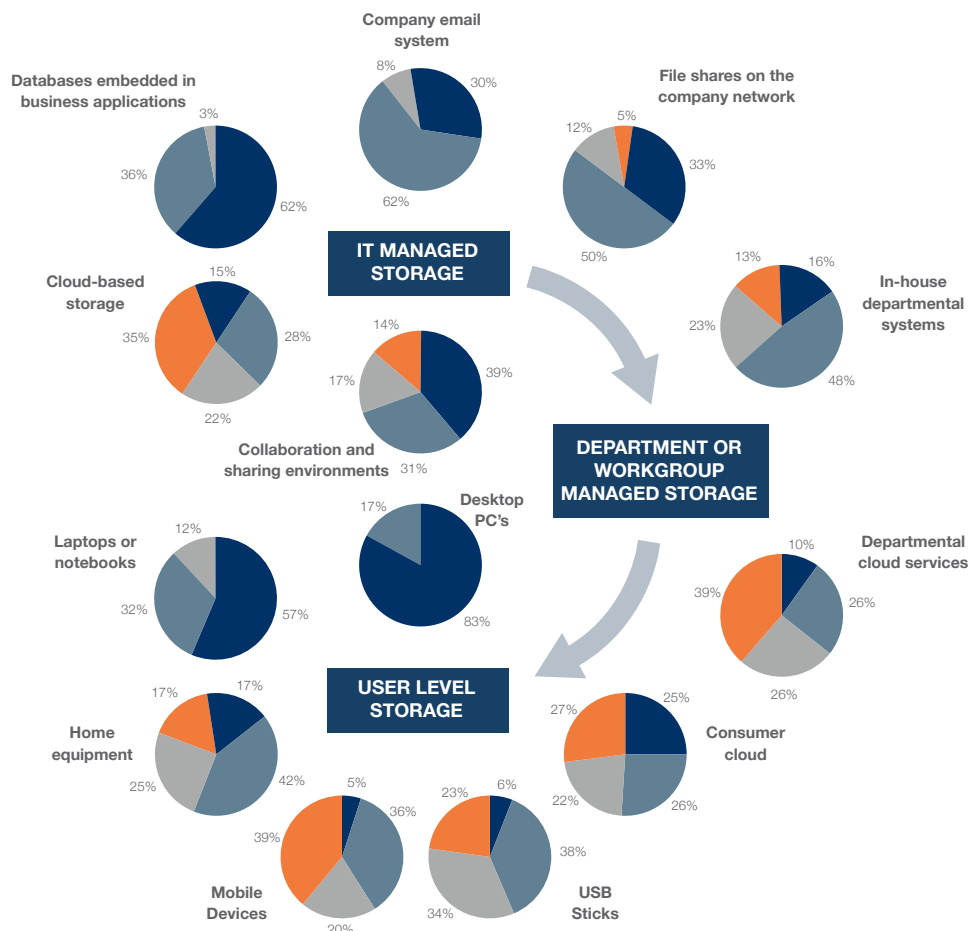


Fragmentation of storage is not helping

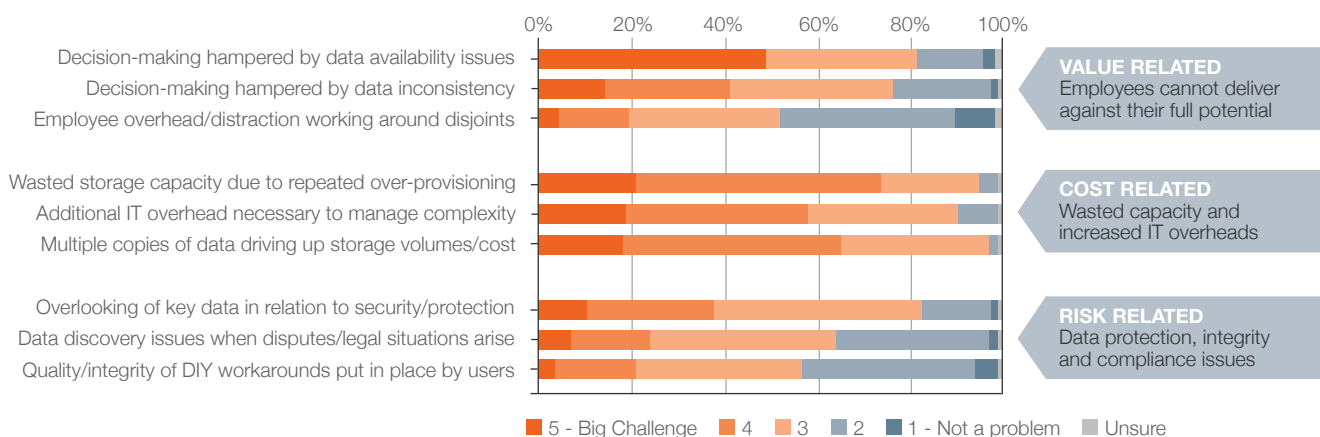
Business information has become highly fragmented across a wide range of locations, and as departments and users gain more control, we can no longer assume that all data is managed by the IT team.

Key to segments

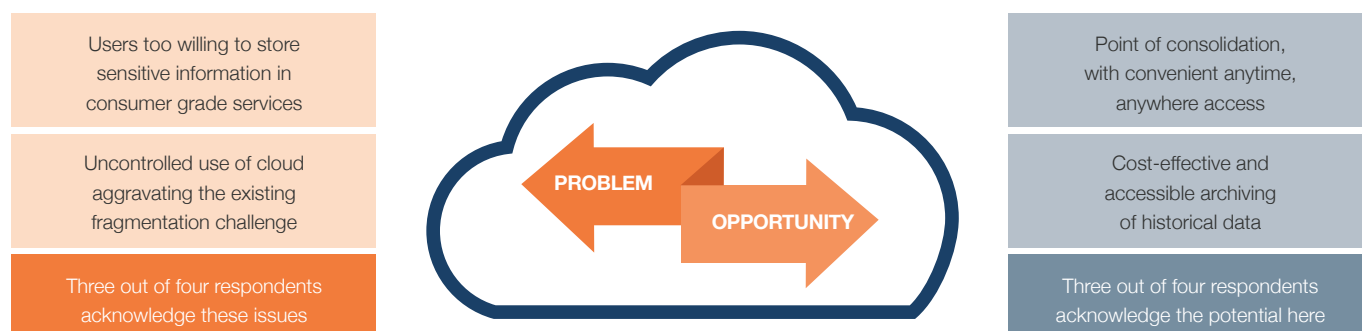
- Used extensively
- Used quite a bit
- Minimally used
- Not used at all



Fragmentation is leading to a range of undesirable consequences



Cloud is a two-edged sword; it's part of both the problem and solution



Valuable lessons can be learned from high achievers

39 of our 300 respondents declared high capability in terms of effectiveness, efficiency and safety when it comes to the management of business information. A number of valuable lessons can be derived from the way they approach things.



Further reading

This document provides a high level summary of key findings from a research study in which data was gathered via in-depth telephone interviews with 300 respondents. Representatives from SMBs and Small Enterprises were included in this from across the USA and UK.

A more in-depth presentation of the insights arising from the study is included in the full research report which is available for download from www.mimecast.com/datafragmentation

About Freeform Dynamics

Freeform Dynamics is a research and analysis firm. We track and report on the business impact of developments in the IT and communications sectors.

As part of this, we use an innovative research methodology to gather feedback directly from those involved in IT strategy, planning, procurement and implementation. Our output is therefore grounded in real-world practicality for use by mainstream IT professionals.

For further information or to subscribe to the Freeform Dynamics free research service, please visit www.freeformdynamics.com or contact us via info@freeformdynamics.com.

About Mimecast

Mimecast (www.mimecast.com) delivers cloud-based email management for Microsoft Exchange, including archiving, continuity and security. By unifying disparate and fragmented email environments into one holistic solution that is always available from the cloud, Mimecast minimizes risk and reduces cost and complexity, while providing total end-to-end control of email. Founded in the United Kingdom in 2003, Mimecast serves more than 7,000 customers and 1.8 million users worldwide and has offices in Europe, North America, Africa, Asia Pacific and the Channel Islands.

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