

Advice on multiuser setup, using IMAP folders

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Okay, here's the CURRENT setup:

We have a website hosted by a company. We have 7 users who have email accounts. We have 5 local PC's arranged in a simple file-sharing network (one PC hosts the shared-out documents folder that everyone uses, but that PC is also a workstation, and it's your basic home network with simple file sharing used, no user or group accounts set up, no logins for workstations, etc.). All accounts are hosted on the server as well. Each user uses a browser-based interface to log into webmail on the server (ie they go to the web address for login, and the interface is all for reading, managing, etc. on the server box).

The mailboxes are huge, using tons of space, etc. I want to start using Outlook to:

- 1) Archive really old Sent and Received emails (remove them from server, store locally). This is probably moot, since it has nothing to do with the actual live access, it's just a point I've brought up to enforce my claim that we need to get all these old-ass emails off the server)
- 2) Use Outlook's better Search and Sort locally, instead of using all the server's time to do stuff like look for emails from a particular person, searching body text for words, etc. It seems to me like using IMAP would still be using server resources, but I have verified that it goes faster when using an Outlook IMAP connection than SmarterMail's search features.
- 3) Set up the community and individual calendars for shared appointments, personal appointment reminders, etc.
- 4) 300 other reasons that are probably obvious to people who are tired of so many people using insufficient means to accomplish stuff.

What I want to make sure I do is STILL allow all users to access the emails via Webmail from any location (ie. I don't want to POP3 anything, because everyone still needs to be able to access the non-archived stuff from home, or if they're travelling, etc.). IN ADDITION, we still need to make sure all users can use Outlook when in-house FROM ANY PC, because we're all trading places all the time, too. So, at the local location, user 1 at PC1 may need to move to PC2, and still be able to Outlook-into their

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server-based email from PC2 using their username/password for their specific email account.

So, what's the best way to handle this? My ideas thus far have been:

- 1) Have a central Outlook PSD in the shared documents location (accessible from all PCS') and set up 7 profiles on each of the 5 PC's; each user who opens Outlook can log in to their own particular profile, which is an IMAP connection the web server
- 2) Set up 7 different PSD's in the shared documents location, and have shortcuts on all PC's that open Outlook pointing to it's own separate PSD

I've tried a couple different combinations of the above, but keep running into problems, such as Outlook asking for the login/pass of every account when the person just wants to get into their own account, etc. But if I separate into 7 different PSD's, there's the problem of having all those shortcuts on everyone's desktop, plus I can't use a community calendar.

Anyone have suggestions for a way I can have people log into their IMAP folder from any PC (without being prompted for the login of the 6 other accounts) and make use of the shared calendar, etc.?

Any advice, opinions, warnings, etc. wuld be greatly appreciated. We're all on Windows XP Pro or Home, all PC's have Office (and so Outlook) either versions XP or 2003.

Thanks for any input, and for reading.

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