



eFolder White Paper: Cloud-enabling the File Server for the Mobile Workforce

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Introduction

“The statistics are astounding. The number of mobile devices now outpaces humans on this planet, as it is estimated that there were 7.3 billion devices in the world in 2012 (compared with just under 7 billion people, according to the World Bank). Mobility is driving significant changes in the way organizations source technology and technology services. Seventy-one percent of IT services executives say that increased employee use of apps on tablets and smartphones also increases services spend (in business and in IT), creates more software-as-a-service (SaaS) deployment on mobile devices, and drives them to hire more third-party services firms across multiple areas, including specialized development and security.”

– The Forrester Wave™: Enterprise, Mobility Services, Q1 2013, Liz Herbert, February 15, 2013

The file server is often used as the authoritative location of corporate data. But with increasingly mobile businesses and enterprises, accessing files through a virtual private network (VPN) or file transfer protocol (FTP) can end up being inefficient and inconvenient. Today’s employees expect access to business-critical documents from their phones, tablets, and laptops—anywhere and at any time.

Cloud-enabling a file server through Anchor’s cloud file sync feature, File Server Enablement, allows enterprises to maintain a single authoritative location for all corporate data, while providing a powerful sharing, collaboration, and security layer to that data.

Additionally, File Server Enablement gives Managed Service Providers (MSPs), Value Added Resellers (VARs) and solution providers the opportunity to eliminate their clients’ dependence on consumer-grade cloud storage solutions, while increasing end-user productivity, improving file visibility, integrity and redundancy, and furthering efficient management of data.

Why the file server matters and how File Server Enablement works

MSPs and IT administrators have long depended on the file server to simplify data administration, since resources reside on a single server and are then accessed in one place by users on the network. Through the file server, a company can maintain the most up-to-date and accurate versions of files.

File Server Enablement, a feature of the Anchor cloud file sync solution, allows MSPs to cloud-enable their clients' file servers, without changing how their clients access and use their data when they are on the local network.

File Server Enablement works by allowing a company to cloud-enable any folder on the file server itself, and map it to a team share or user account within Anchor. When modifications are made to a file within that folder – whether through a mapped drive, VPN, or through one of Anchor's desktop/mobile clients – the latest version of the file will be synced with the file server.

How end-users and organizations benefit from File Server Enablement

The mobile workforce continues to expand, with more people working from home and remote locations. In addition, the bring-your-own device (BYOD) trend means more users are relying on their personal smartphones or tablets to accomplish work-related tasks. According to research firm IDC, by 2015, the world's mobile worker population will reach 1.3 billion, representing 37% of the total workforce.

The mobility trend is impeded by outdated technologies such as VPN and FTP, which employ cumbersome authentication and permission systems.

File Server Enablement eliminates the confusion often associated with mobile access and the use of disparate devices; employees and organizations with File Server Enablement no longer have to locate divergent versions of files, manually manage edits, or depend on VPN or FTP.

File Server Enablement allows users to access, read and change corporate data located on the file server using web and mobile applications on their preferred devices. By providing anytime, anywhere access to business assets, File Server Enablement can radically increase employee and organizational productivity.

How MSPs, VARs and solution providers benefit from File Server Enablement

MSPs, VARs and solution providers are responsible for implementing technologies that improve business operations and ensure uptime. When these solutions are not provided or unavailable, end-users and organizations devise risky workarounds to common issues, resulting in additional frustrations and problems.

Organizations that lack mobile access to the file server often rely on free consumer-grade file-sync solutions. And because these consumer-grade solutions do not allow for cloud-enabling the file server, among other things, end-users are tasked with manually downloading, uploading, replacing, and managing corporate data – posing a risk to organizations and threatening the integrity of the internal file server.

Cloud-enabling the file server eliminates the need for consumer-grade solutions that jeopardize the file server, allowing MSPs, VARs and solution providers to grant their clients mobile access to business data while maintaining the file server as the single authoritative storage location.

When the file server is cloud enabled and mapped to a team share or user within Anchor, administrators are able to easily oversee, manage and secure their client's file server from Anchor's centralized dashboard. With increased visibility and control, administrators can ensure that data is only accessed by approved employees and machines.

Perhaps most importantly, MSPs using Anchor's File Server Enablement can reduce their clients dependence on consumer-grade solutions, while allowing them to profit from a new managed service offering. By adding a powerful sharing and collaboration layer to existing on-premise storage devices, the business case is much easier to make than with a rip-and-replace offering.

Installing File Server Enablement

File Server Enablement is easy to deploy and can be done within minutes.

Documentation:

[How to Cloud-Enable a Server Using Anchor \(File Server Enablement\)](#)

Video:

[Using File Server Enablement](#)

There are four basic steps for cloud-enabling the file server:

1. Install the Anchor agent on the file server
2. Create a dummy account
3. Use the dummy account to locate and enable the file server or device you would like to map folders from
4. Map the folders to users or team shares

File Server Enablement can be deployed with no training and no dramatic changes to current operations. The file server will continue to provide value onsite, including fast storage, exclusive file locks, network mapped drive access, compatibility with roaming profiles and thin desktop/virtual desktop environments. End-users that choose not to use the cloud file sync system will experience no change in the way they interact with business data; end-users are able to do what they have always done in the office, with the added benefit of data in the cloud.

Conclusion

According to Forrester Research, 37 percent of firms interviewed believed that the increasing use of smartphones and tablets will have a moderate or significant impact on their IT services spending over the next 12 months.

File Server Enablement is largely a response to the increasing trend of workforce mobility – employees demand or expect mobile access to corporate data. Cloud-enabling the file server makes organizations more productive by increasing the options for employees working on phones, laptops and tablets, at home, in the office, on vacation or during their commute.

MSPs, VARs and solution providers now have the opportunity to promise their clients anytime, anywhere access and real-time protection of corporate data. Clients do not have to rely on consumer-grade file sync solutions or antiquated remote access techniques.

Cloud file sync replicates data to one or more PCs, Mac, or servers and provides the highly mobile user access to their data no matter where they are. File Server Enablement, while maintaining the file server as the single authoritative location for all corporate data, allows administrators to maintain and improve business operations.

Anchor offers a multi-tenant file and sync and share software with File Server Enablement that allows solution providers to build, price and brand their own solution on a multi-tenant platform. Anchor integrates with Autotask professional services automation (PSA), ConnectWise PSA, Active Directory and features 448-bit Blowfish Encryption. Together, these powerful capabilities enable MSPs, VARs and solution providers to profit from growing trend of fully managed cloud file sync.

About eFolder Anchor

eFolder Anchor is the only cloud file sync solution built from the ground up for MSPs and value-added resellers. Anchor is unique in that respect, and delivers multi-tenant management, partner branding and flexible pricing to IT channel partners.



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