

How Much Does It Really Cost To Setup And Maintain Your Own FTP Server?

Let's face it, most people in Information Technology love control. Control over systems, control over data, and most importantly control over YOU. I'm not suggesting these are bad characteristics to possess when you are trying to protect your company's most crucial asset, such as your data. Let's face it, I would be a little nervous if the thing that kept me gainfully employed was taken away from me because it was cheaper and easier than having it in-house. This often creates a problem when a person on the business side of the company needs to make a decision based on the limited amount of information he or she is getting from IT.

This article is written to outline the expected costs involved in getting your FTP solution in place, thus giving you the facts when it comes to making an important business decision. There are several ways to go about configuring an FTP server, below is the most common:

1. Hardware (\$2500)

Price ranges on processor speed and how much hard drive space you need. Here are the specs of a slimmed down server:

- * A Dell PowerEdge server
- * Dual Xeon 1.83Ghz Processors
- * Windows Server Web Edition
- * 1 Terabyte of storage
- * Raid 5 (For hard drive redundancy)
- * 4 Gigs of Memory
- * 3 Year ProSupport

2. Software (\$500)

There are many FTP server software programs to choose from. They range in price based on product features and how many users can access the account. There are many providers offering this type of product, but I have chosen three popular programs:

- * Serv-U (\$199-\$999)
- * GlobalScape (\$696 – \$1,995)
- * FileZilla – (FREE)

3. Bandwidth (Soft Cost)

Hosting an FTP server in-house will certainly eat into your bandwidth when users start uploading and downloading files. This can cause a dangerous ripple effect on other employees trying to perform important functions such as emailing, web browsing, video conferencing and in some cases, phone calls.

4. Setup Time (1 Day)

- * Configure Windows
- * Purchase SSL (If security is a concern)
- * Configure Network
 - o IP addresses
 - o Hostnames
 - o Firewall Provisioning
- * Configure Backups
- * Configure FTP software
 - o Create user accounts
 - o Create directories
 - o Create file system permissions
 - o FTP server permissions

5. Support (Ongoing)

Must have tech-savvy person on staff to do the following:

- * Manage
- * Backup
- * Troubleshoot problems
- * Apply patches to server
- * Upgrade
- * Monitor

It's easy to say that you can spend \$5000 in creating an FTP server that people can use, not to mention ongoing costs. Cost aside, it will still not have features like custom branding, a web interface that allows anyone to upload/download a file, and a way for any non-IT person to administer.

Before making the decision to bring FTP in-house, I would highly suggest giving SmartFile a try (for as little as a \$108.00 a year). Who knows, you might even make your IT person happy.