Thru.

FTP Replacement

Evaluating the Benefits
of Replacing your FTP System

VERSION 1.4 | WHITE PAPER

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Contents

Synopsis

Traditional FTP can be cumbersome and difficult to use in addition to being a hassle or impossible for IT to manage. Thru® enables businesses to replace FTP servers with a secure, cloud-based alternative. The Thru platform automates FTP protocol transfers and enables modern content collaboration capabilities, allowing for distribution and management of all internal and external file transfers while reducing business risk and total cost of ownership of file transfer applications.

If you currently rely on FTP to exchange and distribute files internally and with external partners or customers, today's digital workplace necessitates a file sharing alternative that provides visibility, control and automation while improving manageability and providing security that meets current legal requirements.

This white paper will give you a detailed understanding of the problems and costs of using traditional FTP servers and the benefits of adopting a secure and flexible alternative such as the Thru Platform that can help your organization retire legacy FTP systems.

Typical FTP Deployments and Challenges

Most FTP servers are set up to help companies share information with partners when email and other delivery options are not available or viable, whether from file size limitations or security concerns. FTP used to be the easiest and most secure way to exchange files over the internet, but this is no longer the case. Since FTP is typically implemented to solve a single problem or meet a specific application requirement, the use of FTP tends to proliferate throughout an organization, with many discrete deployments and no central tools for management and control.

FTP Challenges

FTP Is Not Secure

Files, usernames and passwords sent via FTP are not encrypted in transit or at rest, leaving data vulnerable to compromise.

IT Department Overhead

New user accounts need to be created by an IT Administrator, causing a slow onboarding process and management burden. Support cases from employees who need assistance to operate FTP also add to the overhead.

No Visibility

Since files exchanged via FTP are not tracked and audited, all activities that happen during file exchange aren't visible to administration. From a compliance perspective, an organization needs to know this information in the event of a security breach.

No Control

FTP servers do not give users control over the file. For example, if a file is sent by accident, there is no way to expire the file and prevent the non-intended recipient from viewing it.

Unmanaged Storage

Files sent by FTP tend to stay in local storage; consuming space, adding overhead and representing a long-term security issue and incurring unnecessary costs.

The Real Cost of FTP

The costs of FTP are hidden and ongoing. FTP may appear to be free, but at what "real price" to your business? When making the decision to move from FTP to Thru, you are going to be asked to justify the cost for the business case.

The Main Cost Centers of an FTP System

Data Leak Liability

Your organization may be sharing personal data and be required to comply with mandatory data security and control rules. Should the data you are exchanging be compromised, the organization could be faced with a massive fine and a public relations disaster. These costs will far outweigh any potential cost savings from an inexpensive FTP solution.

Customer Service

With FTP, the ability to track and report actions in the file system is very poor. If your organization cannot track all files in the system, this places a burden on IT whenever customers and partners have questions about a particular file or message that was sent using the FTP system.

IT Administration Overhead

FTP systems are manually administered and typically require someone from the IT department to continuously manage the system. Manual tasks include adding new users, responding to lost password requests and managing the data retention. Large organizations can spend up to 40 man-hours per month administering FTP. The opportunity cost is great; IT could be using this lost time to streamline operations rather than managing an out of date FTP system.

Scalability

Demand on FTP servers can be much higher than normal at certain times. During a product release, for example, there may be a great influx of users coming to retrieve files. Serious problems occur if FTP servers cannot support the load demanded at these peak times. Customers or partners could give up on attempting to retrieve the files and would result in a lack of trust in the company's competency and even loss of contracts. To avoid these problems, excessive hardware must be purchased to support periods of peak demand.

Efficiency & Accuracy

FTP systems work out-of-band with existing workflows, so users are forced to work with FTP clients that have confusing interfaces. In an effort to become more efficient, users often bypass FTP in favor of unsanctioned consumer file sharing services that are potentially less secure than FTP.

Reliability & Integrity

Business processes suffer when relying on a public network. An FTP solution provides no notifications when a file upload or download is completed or when a recipient has received a file. Dealing with transmission failures and corrupted files become a nightmare for both the sender and recipient.

An Alternative to FTP

New technology advancements have made FTP obsolete – and there are several factors that lead many businesses to turn to alternate solutions. If you are currently using FTP, you should be looking for an alternative that provides visibility, control and automation while improving security and manageability.

For 15+ years, Thru has provided an alternative to FTP that enables businesses to exchange large files and folders efficiently, reliably and securely. Industry analysts such as Gartner, Forrester and 451 Research have recognized Thru several times for our enterprise-grade capabilities. The following section presents several of the differentiating features that Thru provides.

The Benefits of Thru

Thru offers the most flexible alternative to FTP in terms of deployment and integration. With out-of-the-box integrations for Microsoft Outlook and Office 365, Salesforce and IBM Notes plus over 100 powerful API calls for integration to additional third-party and proprietary applications, Thru enables businesses to easily replace legacy FTP servers and empower your organization with uninterrupted and secure access to your content from anywhere.

Data Center Security

Enterprise file exchange installation must have a strict security posture. Thru is deployed on a multi-tier network architecture and hosted in Rackspace data centers. Thru partners with datacenters that comply with multiple certifications such as

- SSAE 16 and ISAE 3402 (previously SAS70 II)
- SOC 2
- ISO 27001
- HyTrust
- PCI
- GDPR

Thru prides itself on being protected with best in class physical and operational security:

- Physical monitoring 24/7/365 prevents unauthorized access (security guards on-premises, biometric hand-scans, surveillance cameras, etc.)

- Transactional replication duplicates data and infrastructure to an off-site data center for disaster recovery and business continuity.

- Employee security policies ensure the physical protection of information assets.

Application Security

- FIPS 140-2 compliant AES 256-bit encryption for data at rest

- Password protected emails and message attachment abstraction

- Access control limits (ACL) by roles and built-in security groups

- Active directory integration and single sign-on (SSO)

- Two-factor authentication

- Virus scanning and quarantine of all file uploads to the platform

Tracking & Audits

- Comprehensive audit reports on all file activities such as downloads and uploads, transfers and deletions

- Site activity reports, such as user access, time stamps, etc.

- Unique file tracking numbers

- Your CRM can remain the single system of record on completion of all recipient downloads

Ease of Use

- Multiple upload methods such as file drag and drop with HTML5

- Send large files/folders securely from Outlook, IBM Notes and Salesforce

- Access files in Thru Cloud directly from Office 365 applications Word, Excel and PowerPoint

- Receive files/folders securely with Thru Dropbox™

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Notifications

- Subscribe to folders and get notifications of activity

- Receive notifications when files sent are received and downloaded

- Receive notifications when files have been uploaded to Thru Dropbox™

Policies

- Set policies for specific file types or size

- Set expirations for files even after they've been transferred

- Set retention rules to automatically delete after a time period

FTP Support (SFTP)

- Simple transition from existing/legacy FTP server with minimal impact to existing processes

- Receive files from other applications/platforms that output to a (S)FTP location

- Schedule tasks via FTP to push to or pull from a Thru server

- Popular FTP clients like WinSCP, FileZilla, CuteFTP, CoreFTP and more are supported

- Folder access permissions on the Thru server are the same using FTP as other clients

Administration

- Multiple retention rules to delete files after any amount of time

- Assign managers to specific folders

- Automated onboarding of users

Access Controls

- Grant access to folders for an individual user, group or device

- Rights include read, create, delete, modify, download, send and manage

Desktop Application

- Navigate all files in the system from the folder tree

- View all files sent with Thru with editing capabilities

- Desktop Sync for Windows 7 and above

Global Content Delivery Network

- Content Delivery Network for global access enables fast transfer speeds and low latency access of files

- Any folder can be selectively mirrored across various data centers or restricted to local data centers based on business goals and regulations

Customer Case Study: HKS, Inc.

A leader among global architecture firms, HKS, Inc., employs 1,400 professionals in 24 offices around the world and has completed projects in over 1,500 cities in 92 countries. HKS is recognized for its ability to create buildings of distinction through its unique design process which involves extensive communication with their clients and collaboration among the company's network of professionals located around the globe.

Challenge

Efficient global communication is essential to the HKS business model. They must be able to securely send large files across multiple platforms around the world to clients, contractors and staff. Like much of the architectural industry, HKS used FTP to send files. However, they found FTP to be inconsistent, restrictive and lacking fundamental monitoring, security and internal controls that are necessary in a communication-based company. Files were often lost, deleted or accessed improperly from the FTP servers with no means of tracking delivery. These issues could easily cause completion deadlines to be missed and profit lost. Facing these problems and FTP-related cost overruns, HKS began to look for another solution.

Solution

HKS chose the Thru Platform to replace their FTP system. Thru's Platform includes integrations with Microsoft Outlook, IBM Notes and Salesforce to allow files or folders of any size to be securely sent without any special training or assistance required from the IT staff. Files are easily downloaded by the recipient, and they remain completely secure.

Since files and folders can be stored securely in the cloud, all users can securely and easily access files from anywhere at any time. Management is also greatly simplified, since the administrator can effortlessly set or modify who has access to different files, as well as track and audit information on file receipt and recipient.

The Content Delivery Network (CDN) dynamically distributes files to strategically located core, fallback and edge servers. This allows content to be uploaded onto multiple servers and delivered using the server closest to the recipient, greatly speeding delivery around the globe.

Results

Initially, Thru was deployed for only 100 project team members. The team members substantially increased productivity since they could quickly and effortlessly collaborate on projects having multiple large files. A lot of rework and duplication of files was eliminated because team members were updated with all change requests and project amendments in real-time, without risk of leaks, data loss or compromise to intellectual property. The CDN allowed files to be sent around the globe in a fraction of the time as with FTP with no failure.

With these significant improvements, return on investment was achieved so quickly that HKS soon replaced all FTP project servers with an enterprise-wide deployment. Now over 1,500 users in various international locations share files in the cloud, which allowed managers to share, organize and tightly control access of data and emails project-by-project for the first time. Because of Thru, HKS has greatly advanced efficient global communication.

"We can transfer files electronically, we can track them as well and provide all the reporting information back to the customer, so there is a lot of value in that."

Jack Clark
Vice President Business Systems
HKS, Inc.

How Thru Solves File Sharing Challenges

Thru is a global network with a multi-tier and multi-component service-oriented architecture. Each component of the structure communicates in a loosely-coupled manner, which allows Thru great flexibility in terms of deployment methods, custom integrations and custom service processes. Thru offers a central interface via a web portal and mobile applications for the management of files and file transfers.

Notifications & Reporting

With granular administrative controls, designated administrators are given deep insight into every transaction taken on a file and have control over who and what device may access the system. For users to keep track of their files, internal and external users can receive email confirmation notifications when anyone modifies any file in a folder shared with a partner.

Rapid User Onboarding

Partners who don't have accounts can simply request a user account on the home page of the portal to be approved or denied by the administrator. This removes the burden from IT of having to set up multiple accounts and maintains a single method of exchanging files with partners.

Using Existing FTP Scripts

Thru looks like an FTP server to FTP clients so a company can still use an existing scripting environment to send files to Thru.

Automation

In addition to standard integrations for Salesforce, Microsoft Outlook and Office 365 and IBM Notes, Thru API calls provide easy integration with existing business applications, delivering enhanced user workflows and increased customer satisfaction for external-facing web portals such as customer support and partner portals.

The Thru platform with managed file transfer-as-a-service functionality revolutionizes enterprise file exchange by enabling businesses to easily schedule, track and control high volume file exchanges. Thru unifies file exchange with internal and external organizations by supporting various endpoints (e.g. FTPS/SFTP/Amazon S3) and providing connectors to integration platforms-as-a-service (iPaaS) like MuleSoft and Dell Boomi.

With its expansive integration capability and global presence, the Thru platform is the file exchange cornerstone for some of the world's largest corporations. Thru's enterprise class 360-degree cloud-native architecture continually delivers tangible, escalating returns on investment by uniquely addressing the most challenging managed file transfer, software delivery and content collaboration requirements on a single platform.

For more information about Thru, visit thruinc.com or contact sales@thruinc.com.

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