An Overview To The MailMarshal Service Provider Edition Application Programming Interface (API)

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Contents

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INTRODUCTION

MailMarshal Service Provider Edition (MailMarshal SPE) is a business enablement solution for Managed Service Providers and Internet Service Providers to offer hosted email content security services to their customers. MailMarshal SPE combines email filtering, anti-spam, anti-virus, anti-pornography, anti-phishing, policy compliance, email archiving and reporting into a centrally managed, highly scalable architecture. MailMarshal SPE enables Service Providers to easily offer email hosting services to any size business, with a customizable user interface and tiered service levels.

MailMarshal SPE offers a very flexible toolset which allows a Service Provider to establish their own customized offering with multiple tiers of service for customers which can all be billed at different rates. SPE enables Service Providers to provide their customers with two different levels of protection:

- **Basic** – for those that require no more than simplistic enable/disable control over pre-defined rules

- **Advanced** – for those that wish to access and manage access their own policy definition wizard. Multiple policy packages can be defined for both levels as well as a base set of policy enforced to every customer.

MailMarshal SPE also provides an Application Programming Interface (API) for the Service Provider. The API enables Service Providers to develop tools to integrate with their billing system, allowing for automated customer provisioning and maintenance. This means that Service Providers can create new customer accounts in their existing billing system and the associated SPE account can be instantly and automatically created using details from the billing system. This provides substantial benefits: fast set-up time, minimal administrative effort and controlled costs.

The API also provides Service Providers with functions that allow them to retrieve information about the status of the various components of the SPE environment. For example, information can be retrieved about the free disk space on a mail processing node or the date of the last SpamCensor signature updates. This allows Service Providers or third-party developers to create customized status pages or additional alerting mechanisms.

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APPLICATION PROGRAMMING INTERFACE – KEY FEATURES

The API is designed to function as an interface between a Service Provider's backend applications, such as their customer billing/record system, and the MailMarshal SPE administration system. The key functions of the API are:

- Allows for the fast and easy creation of new customer accounts in MailMarshal SPE. Service Provider administrators can set up a new customer account in their billing system and MailMarshal SPE, simultaneously–saving time and effort

- Allows administrators to make changes to customer or domain details in the billing system and have the changes automatically published to MailMarshal SPE

- Allows for additional monitoring and alerting services via environment status queries

- Provides a platform-agnostic interface via Web service architecture, allowing applications to be developed in any language that supports the Web services standard, including languages such as C++, C#, Java, or Visual Basic.

The API is straightforward and fully documented.

EXAMPLE: Automatic Configuration of Customer Accounts in SPE

A Service Provider uses Axapta as their main customer billing system; Axapta has an extensible programming interface enabling it to work with other systems. Service Provider has created an application to interface between Axapta and MailMarshal SPE using the Axapta API and the MailMarshal SPE API. This application looks at any changes made in Axapta and synchronizes those changes with MailMarshal SPE. Under the customer record in Axapta the Service Provider has added fields for the customers' managed email domains and email service packages the customer has subscribed to.

The application interfacing between Axapta and MailMarshal SPE is able to create new customer entries, change or modify customer settings, such as email domains, and any changes to the service packages they use in MailMarshal SPE. MailMarshal SPE is able to send back to Axapta, through the application interface, billing information, such as the number of seats a customer might be running to ensure accurate billing. You can even use the API to enforce seat counts to customers that have been defined in Axapta, and possibly have a website that customers could visit to request more licenses that are automatically enabled through MailMarshal SPE and charged through Axapta.

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EXAMPLE: Status Monitoring of MailMarshal SPE Environment through Existing Management Console

A Service Provider uses HP Openview to monitor their entire environment. By default they would only be able to query basic information from the MailMarshal SPE environment such as overall server status. By using the MailMarshal API and Openview's extensibility, a Service Provider could add significantly more detailed information to their Openview monitoring consoles. This detailed information comes in three main areas:-

1. SPE Service Agent Status – Covers all the SPE agents running throughout the SPE installation

2. Detailed Mail Processing Node information – Availability status as well as current load and queue status

3. Configuration Status across SPE Installation – To ensure configuration consistency

Within Openview they could create a view showing, for example, the current queue status on all MailMarshal processing servers as well as the average time behind value, to give an indication of any significant delays. This could provide some early warning information enabling them to remedy the situation before customers have noticed there might be an issue. They could also extend the Openview graphical display showing Green, Amber & Red status indicators against the high-level systems and then enable the administrators to drill into any particular system to see where an Amber or Red lights might be showing. This could come down to the individual SPE agent status on each component of the SPE Installation.

SUMMARY

The MailMarshal SPE API enables a significant amount of information to be imported or synchronized into SPE as well as a significant amount of data to be exported to use with other systems. With this flexible and extensible interface Service Providers are only limited by their imagination when integrating MailMarshal SPE into their existing systems and processes.

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