



## Overview

**Country or Region:** United States

**Industry:** Retail

## Customer Profile

Expedia has approximately 4,400 full-time employees worldwide. Its vision is to become the largest and most profitable seller of travel services and products in the world.

## Business Situation

Following a period of intense growth, Expedia sought to help its employees collaborate more productively across long distances.

## Solution

Working with communication and collaboration specialists at Wadeware and Gold Systems, Expedia deployed Microsoft® Exchange Server 2007.

## Benefits

- Unified e-mail, voice mail, and fax
- Information-rich Web mail interface
- Empowered mobile workers
- Easier administration

## Online Travel Company Empowers Remote Workers with Messaging Solution

“The convergence of our major brands creates a greater need for effective collaboration across great distances. Exchange Server 2007 is the linchpin of our strategy to meet that need.”

Mark Whitehurst, Director, Applications Engineering, Expedia

Expedia is the world’s leading online travel company, providing business and leisure travelers with tools and information to easily research, plan, book, and experience travel. Based in Bellevue, Washington, Expedia operates internationally in Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Australia, and China. As the company’s early rapid growth stabilized, its IT department sought ways to help employees become more productive and collaborate more effectively across long distances. To meet this goal, the department deployed Microsoft® Exchange Server 2007. The communication and collaboration server’s integration with Microsoft Windows® SharePoint® Services enables remote users to easily access documents on the company’s network, and mobile devices powered by Microsoft Windows Mobile® 5.0 give employees a flexible messaging solution while they’re on the road.



## Situation

The mission of Expedia, one of the leading travel services companies in the world, is to provide its customers with everything they need to research, plan, and purchase a trip. The company gives consumers direct access to travel products and services through its North American Web site, localized versions throughout Europe, and extensive partnerships in Asia. Expedia-branded Web sites feature airline tickets, hotel reservations, car rentals, cruises, and many other in-destination services from a broad selection of partners. The company's portfolio of brands includes Expedia.com, hotels.com, Hotwire, Expedia Corporate Travel, TripAdvisor, and Classic Vacations.

"The role of IT at Expedia is to provide applications, connectivity, and anything else that's needed in order for the business to meet its goals," says Mark Whitehurst, Director, Applications Engineering at Expedia. "For a long time, our focus was on facilitating and managing rapid growth during our first couple of years. Now we want to make more progress in the area of productivity, and one of the keys to that is effective long-distance collaboration."

The company's messaging and collaboration environment is built on Microsoft® Exchange Server 2003 Service Pack 2, deployed on 12 HP DL380 and DL580 server computers running the Windows Server® 2003 Enterprise Edition operating system. The system supports 5,000 mailboxes, 4,500 of which are user accounts. Nearly all Expedia employees use one of the many available instant messaging programs as a productivity-enhancing tool; the company wants to standardize this technology in the near future. Microsoft Office SharePoint® Portal Server 2003 enables document sharing and collaboration across the enterprise.

"Remote access is very big for us right now," says Chris Wolfe, Senior Systems Engineer at Expedia. "Many of our employees use the network from remote office locations or while traveling. It's important to us that they be able to access the resources they need in a secure, compartmentalized way that's appropriate to their roles." Some of the ways that remote and mobile workers access the Expedia network is through Microsoft Office Outlook® Web Access, virtual private networking, and a variety of mobile devices.

## Solution

As part of its search for tools that would better enable long-distance collaboration, Expedia deployed Microsoft Exchange Server 2007 in October 2006. Microsoft Services demonstrated the beta version of Exchange Server 2007 to Expedia technicians in April 2006, seeking their feedback on the installation process and administrative console. When it came time to deploy the software at Expedia in October, Expedia drew upon the expertise of Wadeware, a consulting firm specializing in communication and collaboration.

Bill Wade, Senior Consultant at Wadeware, says, "We used the Microsoft Exchange Server Best Practices Analyzer prior to the installation to verify that the environment was ready. We sent the output that we received to Microsoft Services, who went through it to confirm that there were no configuration issues that would present a problem for Exchange Server 2007."

The Expedia deployment team installed Exchange Server 2007 with the Mailbox server role on an HP server computer with a 64-bit dual core processor and six gigabytes of random access memory. They also configured three Dell 2850 64-bit servers with:

- Exchange Server 2007 Unified Messaging server role.

“I really like the meeting request function in Outlook Web Access. It shows me other people’s free/busy status and tells me the best times to schedule meetings with them, which makes calendaring easier.”

John Hubbard, Senior Systems Administrator, Expedia

- The Hub Transport and Client Access server roles.
- Microsoft Internet Security and Acceleration (ISA) Server 2004 Enterprise Edition.

With this configuration, ISA Server enables connectivity with Windows Mobile® software and remote procedure calls. All of the servers run the Windows Server 2003 Enterprise x64 Edition operating system.

Microsoft Gold Certified Partner Gold Systems provided valuable assistance with deploying and configuring Unified Messaging— which provides e-mail, voice mail, and fax services through Exchange Server 2007—on the company’s existing Nortel telephone system, using Dialogic PBX-IP Media Gateway with DNI. Gold Systems worked with Expedia IT administrators to implement the system, training them on features such as dialing restrictions and customized auto-attendants.

Expedia reports a smooth, successful installation and reliable messaging access since Exchange Server 2007 was deployed. The company plans to begin migrating substantial numbers of users to the new environment in early 2007.

### Benefits

Expedia is impressed with the results that it has achieved with Exchange Server 2007 in its initial deployment and sees the software as a vital component of the company’s messaging and collaboration environment. “The convergence of our major brands creates a greater need for effective collaboration across great distances,” says Whitehurst. “Exchange Server 2007 is the linchpin of our strategy to meet that need.”

### Unified E-Mail, Voice Mail, and Fax

Expedia has received enthusiastic user feedback about Unified Messaging. “Expedia sees the value of Exchange Unified

Messaging to assist in productivity and communications throughout the company,” says Deb Prenger at Gold Systems.

“We’re very focused on the potential benefits of replacing our traditional voice mail infrastructure with a server-based solution: increased productivity through voice mail, e-mail—all messages coming into the same application,” says Whitehurst. “Our users appreciate the convenience of accessing voice mail through Exchange Server 2007. Speech recognition has also been well received. Being able to access calendar information and voice mail through Exchange Unified Messaging is a big value add.”

### Information-Rich Web Mail Interface

One aspect of Exchange Server 2007 that particularly impresses Expedia users is the improved Outlook Web Access. “I really like the meeting request function in Outlook Web Access,” says John Hubbard, Senior Systems Administrator at Expedia. “It shows me other people’s free/busy status and presents the best times to schedule meetings with them.” Hubbard also appreciates the name-recognition capabilities of Outlook Web Access, which enables the software to access the company’s global address list and automatically complete addresses as the user types them.

From an administrative standpoint, Hubbard says that the enhanced Outlook Web Access will help users manage their mailboxes more easily, reducing the burden on system administrators to do so. “When your mailbox starts to get full—as mine tends to do quite often—you can see it on a bar graph off to one side,” he says. “It’s a good way of letting users know how close they are to their mailbox limits before they go over.”

### Empowered Mobile Workers

Many Expedia workers rely on mobile devices to stay connected wherever they are. Up until

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Chris Wolfe, Senior System Engineer, Expedia

recently, the company has primarily used BlackBerry devices, but Wolfe believes that users may switch to devices powered by Windows Mobile 5.0 software as the advanced mobility features in Exchange Server 2007 make such devices more prevalent. “We want to give our users a real choice about which mobile technology meets their needs,” he says.

Comparing the two, Wolfe says, “Windows Mobile–based devices have a very low learning curve because of the familiar interface. The convergence of the Windows® operating system and the mobile phone seems to be a good fit.”

Creating a more integrated messaging environment will provide users with greater access to needed resources. Whitehurst says, “One feature that we’re very interested in exploring is providing mobile users with access to files in SharePoint Portal Server. That flexibility will be a strong benefit to traveling employees.” Another point of access for mobile users is Outlook Web Access, which enables users to securely browse document libraries and open documents with Microsoft Windows SharePoint Services and on Windows-based file shares.

#### **Easier Administration**

Several aspects of Exchange Server 2007 make managing the messaging environment easier for IT administrators at Expedia, beginning with the server roles. “The server roles in Exchange Server 2007 mirror a lot of the things that we’ve done operationally to make our system easy to support,” says Whitehurst. “They fit in with our existing best practices without a lot of additional configuration.”

When Expedia initially deployed Exchange Server 2007, it strictly standardized server hardware and software configurations. Servers are optimized for their specific

functions—routing, mailbox, or client access. This standardization, along with capacity planning, has kept uptime of the company’s messaging systems high and minimized the support burden on the operations team.

Wolfe says that the command-line administrative console provided by Exchange Management Shell, built on Windows PowerShell technology, makes deploying new servers easy. “With Exchange Management Shell, we can use PowerShell scripts to automate the entire Exchange Server 2007 configuration process, giving us fast and consistent Exchange Server deployments.”

## For More Information

For more information about Microsoft products and services, call the Microsoft Sales Information Center at (800) 426-9400. In Canada, call the Microsoft Canada Information Centre at (877) 568-2495. Customers who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can reach Microsoft text telephone (TTY/TDD) services at (800) 892-5234 in the United States or (905) 568-9641 in Canada. Outside the 50 United States and Canada, please contact your local Microsoft subsidiary. To access information using the World Wide Web, go to: [www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com)

For more information about Wadeware products and services, call (425) 497-9833 or visit the Web site at: [www.wadeware.net](http://www.wadeware.net)

For more information about Gold Systems products and services, call (303) 447-2774 or visit the Web site at: [www.goldsys.com](http://www.goldsys.com)

For more information about Expedia products and services, call (425) 679-7200 or visit the Web site at: [www.expedia.com](http://www.expedia.com)

## Microsoft Server Product Portfolio

For more information about the Microsoft server product portfolio, go to: [www.microsoft.com/servers](http://www.microsoft.com/servers)

For more information about Microsoft Exchange Server, go to [www.microsoft.com/exchange](http://www.microsoft.com/exchange)

### Software and Services

- Microsoft Server Product Portfolio
  - Microsoft Exchange Server 2007
  - Microsoft Internet Security and Acceleration Server 2004 Enterprise Edition
  - Microsoft Office SharePoint Portal Server 2003
  - Microsoft Windows Server 2003 Enterprise x64 Edition
- Microsoft Windows Mobile 5.0

### Technologies

- Microsoft Office Outlook Web Access
- Microsoft Windows SharePoint Services

### Hardware

- HP and Dell server computers

### Partners

- Wadeware
- Gold Systems