

FileGenius vs. FTP



Most business users must periodically send large electronic files to remote destinations. Although FTP is a better option than email for sending large files, many businesses find the technology difficult to use and IT administrators typically object to FTP's lack of manageability.

Given the importance of file sharing in everyday business transactions, both inside and outside an organization, a better solution to the problem of using FTP is to replace it with a secure file transfer solution like FileGenius (www.filegenius.com). For many organizations, such a secure infrastructure might best be implemented through a web-based system like FileGenius that can be deployed quickly and integrates well with existing business processes.

FTP began as a programmer's tool designed to exchange large files. Because of FTP's utility in transferring large amounts of information, it has grown in popularity among businesses in industries such as advertising, graphic design, engineering, architecture, as well as legal and financial firms which frequently send a large amount of information as part of a normal business day. Although email is often used instead of FTP in many business scenarios because it is considered a user-friendly option, there are the nagging issues of server loading, disk quotas and corporate policies that often require that files above five to ten megabytes must be sent via FTP.

While FTP is a logical technical solution for transferring large files, it suffers from two major flaws when used as a business tool:

The typical FTP user interface often detracts from the experience of using the protocol, particularly for non-technical users.

FTP management is not a trivial issue and requires more time than many IT departments have to devote to it.

Businesses find FTP difficult to use, and IT administrators balk at FTP's lack of manageability.

IT departments typically do not care for FTP because the same ID/password is frequently shared among multiple users, due to the management and maintenance requirements for singular, multiple accounts. Further, IT administrators charged with cleaning up an FTP server that has been in use for some time often have insufficient information about which files must be kept and which can safely be discarded. Solutions like FileGenius offer comprehensive file annotation and batch file actions which completely eliminate this concern.

Yet another problem with FTP is that native systems do not have audit and security capabilities that can comply with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), Section 404 of Sarbanes-Oxley, and 21 CFR Part 11. In short, the use of native FTP results in the storage and delivery of information assets that are not auditable or compliant. While newer FTP protocols such as SFTP, FTPS, and EFTP can achieve more security than traditional FTP, they may be more difficult for many organizations to implement than traditional FTP because of coordination and administration issues. Solutions like FileGenius are more secure, easier to implement and more cost effective than

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SFTP, FTP's, and EFTP. Typical security problems with FTP's parallel/simultaneous data and control connections and how this works (or doesn't work) behind a firewall is not a problem with an HTTP file transfer solution like FileGenius.

Because of the shortcomings of FTP, organizations in need of sending large files are beginning to consider a new paradigm for sending these files. Secure file transfer solutions like FileGenius that mask the underlying technical complexity of the solution from non-technical users, while still allowing businesses to design processes that are easy to use and meet security and compliance requirements, are the next generation in file transfer solution, and a useful alternative to FTP.

Creating and administering FTP accounts is a time consuming task. Further, IT administrators charged with cleaning up an FTP server that has been in use for some time often have insufficient information about which files must be kept and which can safely be discarded.

The features of a secure, easy-to-use file transfer system should include:

The ability to replace email attachment transfers without being part of the email messaging infrastructure. By replacing email file transfer functions, benefit is immediately derived, offloading attachments into a parallel infrastructure. Attachments can constitute up to 80% of all email traffic in some organizations.

The ability to implement and use business-level security. For many organizations, business security requirements extend beyond just encryption and include other security measures such as granular permissions which permit private workspaces within the same master, organizational site, secure login with no storage of passwords, no residual session pages, no cookies, transparent DNS zone configuration, as well as the ability to authenticate recipients and to manage file lifecycles in order to minimize exposure of sensitive data (two near-future features of FileGenius).

The ability to easily manage and maintain the system. A low total cost of ownership for IT is key to the success of any new system, including file transfer systems like FileGenius.

Among secure file transfer solutions, it makes sense for any organization to consider the use of a web-based file transfer site like FileGenius, a dedicated solution that can solve the problems associated with conventional file transfer processes that are currently handled through email or FTP-based solutions. Additionally, a solution like FileGenius can provide ALL of the benefits of an appliance/hardware solution like FTA (File Transfer Appliance) with no hosting or hardware costs, nor maintenance of hardware costs. The FileGenius solution will benefit IT departments through its non-existent maintenance and management requirements, and can easily solve current file transfer problems for users throughout the organization. Solutions like FileGenius also solve the file transfer problem for end users by allowing them easy access to file transfer capabilities that include many work facilitating features and greater ease of use.