WHITE PAPER

# MailSite SP Sample Clustered Environments

*For Email Administrators and Architects*

**A MailSite White Paper**

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# 1 Introduction

This white paper describes sample MailSite SP 11 cluster environments. MailSite SP is a flexible messaging server, so there is no typical configuration. The examples show how existing and prospective MailSite SP customers can lay out a cluster for different kinds of hosting.

The examples are starting points, not sizing advice. The right number of servers depends on your mailbox count, how people use their mail and the content scanning you run. Count active mailboxes when you plan: a mailbox that signs in every few minutes from a phone and Outlook uses far more than one that is rarely opened. Anti-virus scanning, spam filtering and Sieve filters also add to the processing load for every message received.

Every environment in this paper is built from the same parts:

- **MailSite application servers.** Each one runs the complete set of MailSite services and can serve any mailbox.
- **A MailSite data server.** A file server holds the shared mail store: mail, mailing lists, mailbox databases and the MailSite configuration.
- **Load balancing.** Round-robin DNS or load balancing switches send clients and incoming mail to the application servers.

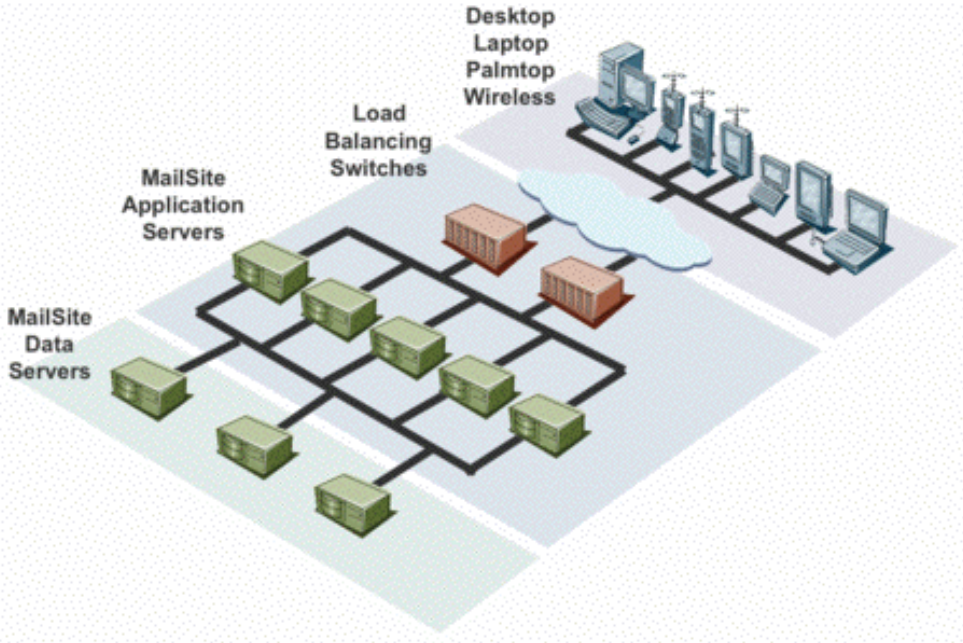



**Fig 1: Typical MailSite SP Cluster Architecture**

# 2 Overview

MailSite SP is typically deployed by service providers who want a load-balanced, fault-tolerant and scalable messaging cluster on Windows servers they control. It is also used by larger organizations that host mail for several sites or companies.

Some points that shape every MailSite SP 11 cluster:

- **No database server to run.** MailSite 11 keeps its configuration in SQLite databases inside the shared mail store. There is no SQL Server database to install, license or back up separately. SQL Server or another ODBC database is needed only if you keep mailboxes or mailing list members in an external database.
- **Settings made once.** All servers read the same configuration, so a change in the Console applies to every server.
- **Simple provisioning.** Domains, mailboxes, aliases and mailing lists can be created in the Console, with the command-line utilities or by XML import and export.
- **Standard file storage.** The mail store is a Windows file share. Use any file server that fully supports Windows file sharing and file locking, whether it uses a SAN, NAS or directly attached disks.
- **Every client from every server.** Each server offers SMTP, IMAP, POP, ExpressPro webmail, Exchange ActiveSync for phones, Exchange Web Services (EWS) for Mac apps and MAPI over HTTP for Classic Outlook. MailSite serves the web protocols itself, with no IIS.
- **Security included.** ClamAV anti-virus, Bayesian anti-spam, reputation lists, greylisting, Sieve filters, Brute Force Attack Protection (BFAP) and Transport Layer Security (TLS) with Let’s Encrypt certificates for each domain.
- **One release everywhere.** Every server of a cluster runs the same MailSite release, so plan each upgrade as a short outage for the whole cluster.

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# 3 Small Business Hosting

In this example, a provider hosts mail for small businesses on a shared cluster. Each customer is its own domain, with its own domain administrator.

- Anti-virus and anti-spam scanning on all incoming mail
- ExpressPro webmail, phones over ActiveSync and Classic Outlook over MAPI

Anti-virus and anti-spam scanning add considerably to the SMTP processing load, so the provider sizes the cluster for message volume as well as mailbox count.

- Two MailSite application servers, with round-robin DNS naming both
- One file server holding the shared mail store

This is the smallest cluster. There is no load balancer to buy or configure. If a server fails, DNS keeps sending some clients to it, so an administrator removes it from DNS by hand until it is repaired. Mail waiting in its spool is delivered once it is back. The file server is the single point of failure.

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# 4 Large Hosting Provider

In this example, a large hosting provider uses a MailSite SP cluster for shared email hosting. It provides POP, IMAP, SMTP and webmail access to many small business domains.

- Anti-virus scanning and Sieve filters on all mail
- A high message volume for each mailbox

Anti-virus scanning and Sieve filters create a heavy processing load for SMTP. The provider adds application servers as the number of customers grows.

- Several MailSite application servers behind a load balancer
- A file server on a SAN, sized for growth
- A small operations team, because every server shares one configuration

The load balancer stops sending connections to a server that has failed, so clients reconnect to the others without anyone changing DNS. To add capacity, the provider installs the same release on a new server, joins it to the installation, copies its certificates and adds it to the load balancer.

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# 5 Internet Service Provider

In this example, an internet service provider (ISP) uses a MailSite SP cluster for high-volume messaging, with heavy POP, IMAP, SMTP, webmail and mail forwarding. Its customers use MailSite's Sieve filters, mail forwarding, automatic replies and mailing lists.

- Sieve filters, mail forwarding and mailing lists
- Simple provisioning of domains and mailboxes

The ISP needs very high reliability. A MailSite SP cluster lets it build redundancy and fault tolerance into every layer.

- Several MailSite application servers behind a redundant pair of load balancers
- A NAS that serves the mail store over a Windows file share

The file server is the part every application server depends on, so the ISP chooses storage that can fail over by itself and plans its capacity and backup first.

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# 6 Dedicated Server Groups

In this example, a regional ISP uses MailSite SP as the mail server for its broadband and hosting customers. It uses many of MailSite's security features.

- Anti-virus, anti-spam, BFAP, Sieve filters and TLS

It gives each group of application servers its own job. Every server is a complete MailSite installation with the same configuration; the load balancers decide which traffic each group receives.

- Two MailSite servers receive mail from the internet. The domains' MX records point at them.
- The other MailSite servers handle client access: webmail, phones, Outlook, POP and IMAP, and mail that customers send.
- A SAN, shared with other applications, holds the mail store.

Spam floods and attacks from the internet reach only the servers for incoming mail, so they do not slow down customers' mail. Each group can grow on its own.

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# 7 Appendix

## 7.1 Related Links

MailSite SP data sheet:
https://www.mailsite.com/datasheet/product/mailsite-sp-11.pdf

Clustering Strategies for MailSite SP:
https://www.mailsite.com/datasheet/clustering/mailsite-clustering-strategy-11.pdf

MailSite 11 Administrator Guide:
https://www.mailsite.com/datasheet/admin/mailsite-admin-guide-v11.pdf

Hosting and clustering with MailSite:
https://www.mailsite.com/email-server-features/clustering

MailSite support:
https://www.mailsite.com/support

# 8 Disclaimer

This document is a resource provided free of charge for MailSite customers. The environments it describes are examples, not measured installations. Although every care has been taken by Rockliffe to ensure the accuracy of the contents, Rockliffe disclaims all warranties, either express or implied, regarding this document. Rockliffe is not liable for any damages arising directly or indirectly from the information in this document.

## 8.1 Planning Assistance

Rockliffe can help you choose the number of servers, the storage and the network layout for your mailbox count and availability needs. Contact sales@mailsite.com to discuss your requirements.