Email Is a Time Waster

White Paper 2016

webproof®

Email Is a Time Waster

When I look around in offices, I typically see people sitting in front of their screens, reading, searching, and sorting through their email. For many years I have talked about this huge waste of time and money.

This has mainly been based on my experience with IBM, the graphics industry, and the LEGO success story. By converting to an online proofing solution, LEGO reduced their document approval time by 35%. And time is money! With 60,000 projects annually, I couldn't calculate how many emails and attachments were removed from employee email boxes. But not many people are aware that email is such a time waster.

Most financial people concentrate on reducing cost and not on making our day-to-day work more efficient. I recently saw the above headlines, well documented by especially the McKinsey Group and the Radicati Group, and was inspired to write this short White paper, including a collection of links to documentation that validates my observations.

I hope that this will help companies open their eyes to the huge savings they have right in front of them, just by establishing an email policy and an online cloud proofing solution for their projects.

Jan Adeltoft
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1 trillion pieces of company data is stored in private emails - every day!

85%
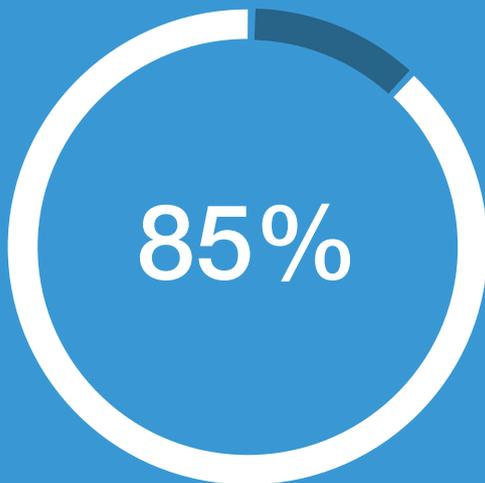
85% of all business data is stored in personal e-mail attachments

28%
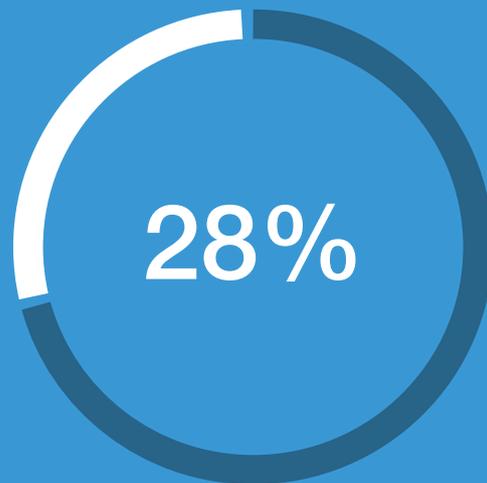
28% of all our time in the office is spent managing emails

Executive Summary

Although email is the most efficient method of business communication, companies lose a lot of profits through email. Research shows that email contributes significantly to unnecessary business costs. These costs include the time taken by employees to sort and manage their email accounts as well as the amount of time it takes to approve a document. Sending information and file attachments back and forth results in huge consumption of server and storage resources, which increases IT costs for businesses. But even more important, all of your business data is stored in your individual employees' email boxes, and is not easily available to the company.

No matter which statistics you trust, the documentation all points in the same direction, indicating that if we don't stop for a moment and take action to change the way we collaborate, communicate, and distribute our company data, email-related costs and problems will continue to grow in the next few years.

Remember those statistics: 28% of the work day in 2015 was spent managing, reading, and sorting through emails, and 85% of all company data is attached and stored in individual personal emails, potentially unavailable to the company. In the United States alone this translates into 1 trillion pieces of company data distributed in this way - every day.
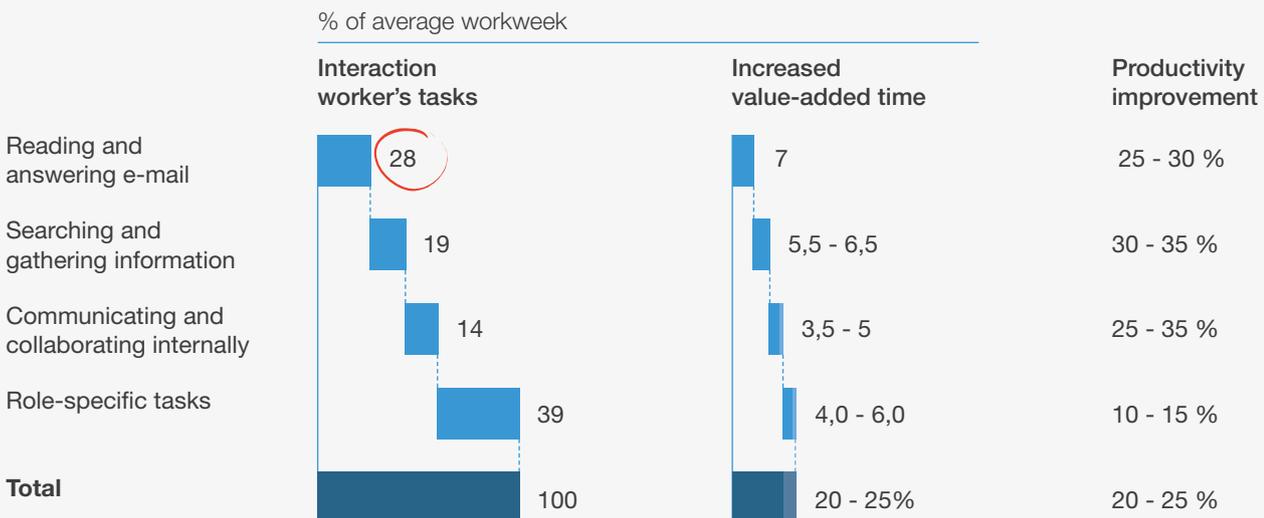
Make your own conclusions and action plan for turning this around at your company; I will just pinpoint three solutions that are practically no-cost:

- *Stablish an email policy concerning the use of CC, BCC, spam, and attachments*

- *Don't attach company data in emails: maintain it in a central archive, organized by project*

- *Use online proofing for all documents to be approved to eliminate a high volume of emails and attachments*

LEGO has documented that when they converted from email proofing to an online proofing solution, they reduced their turn-around time by up to 35%. This change involved no longer attaching files to an email, but rather attaching messages to a file, central stored project by project.

Move from attaching files to a message(email) - to attach message to a file.

Improved communication and collaboration through social technologies could raise the productivity of interaction workers by 20 to 25 percent.

% of average workweek

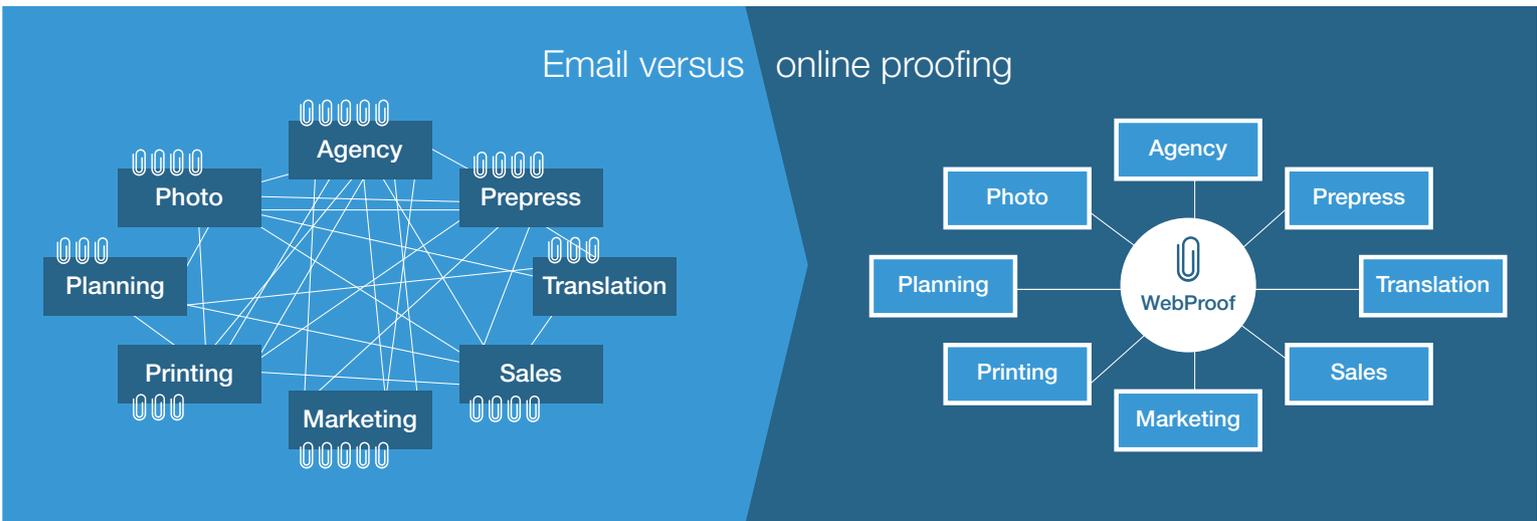|	Interaction worker's tasks	Increased value-added time	Productivity improvement
Reading and answering e-mail	28	7	25 - 30 %
Searching and gathering information	19	5,5 - 6,5	30 - 35 %
Communicating and collaborating internally	14	3,5 - 5	25 - 35 %
Role-specific tasks	39	4,0 - 6,0	10 - 15 %
Total	100	20 - 25%	20 - 25 %

Source: International Data Corporation (IDC); McKinsey Global Institute analysis

Email and Statistics

There is no question that email is one of the most important means of communication and collaboration in the business world. Although other communication platforms such as social media, instant messaging, phone, meetings, and chats are also essential communication channels in business, email is the most ubiquitous form of business communication. Despite the benefits that email provides for businesses, however, research shows that it contributes significantly to unnecessary business costs.

These costs include the time taken by employees to sort or manage their email accounts as well as the amount of time it takes to approve documents. Sending information back and forth also results in consumption of server and storage space, increasing IT costs for businesses. Finally, every day 1 trillion files of company data is stored in millions of personal emails as attachments, essentially unavailable to the company. This report indicates the relevance of email communication, especially within the graphics industry, and shows how it contributes to overhead and hurts the bottom line for companies.

Email versus online proofing

Agency · Photo · Prepress · Planning · Translation · Printing · Sales · Marketing · WebProof

An analysis by the McKinsey Global Institute concluded that more than 28% of the workday is spent managing email and uploading attachments

28%
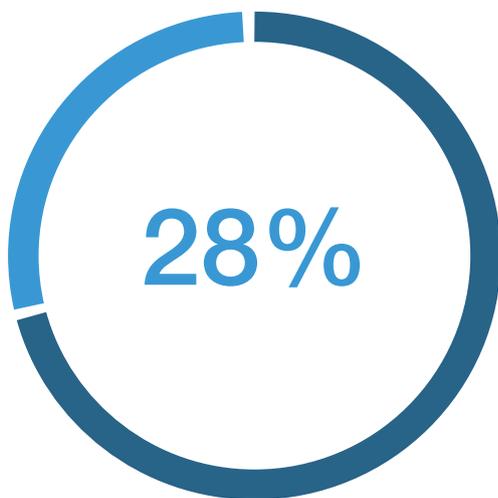
An analysis by the McKinsey Global Institute concluded that more than 28% of the workday is spent managing email and uploading attachments. Sorting emails can be a difficult task for businesses, especially when they involve large numbers of documents with corrections and revisions. According to the report by the Radicati Group, employees spend about 2 hours per day on email.

This time is spent searching and sorting through different emails, according to the needs and job functions of the individual employees and not to forget that it takes 16 minutes to refocus on their work after handling email.

205 Billion Emails Sent and Received Daily

In spite of the development of other channels, email is still the most pervasive form of communication in the business world globally. The number of email accounts has been growing steadily in the recent past, with over 4.3 billion accounts in 2015 and over 5.5 billion projected for the end of 2019. (All data in this section is based on the 2015 report by the Radicati Group.)

The total number of email users (versus accounts) was about 2.6 billion in 2015, since the average number of accounts per user was 1.7. About 205 billion emails were sent and received daily. The number of users is expected to grow at the rate of 3% annually over the next four years. But the number of emails is increasing at a rate of 7%, which means that the number of emails per user is increas-
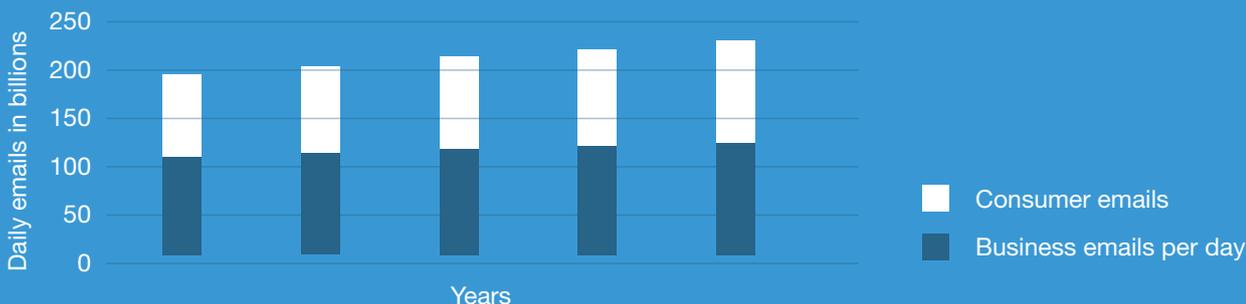
ing rapidly. This data is an average for all businesses and industries; within the graphics industry this trend is much more pronounced, due to both the number of documents and the number of people who have to approve them.

The number of business emails received and sent per user per day in 2015 was 122. The number of emails received for each business user per day is more than twice those sent: the average number of emails sent was 34, while those received daily numbered 88. The number of emails sent is projected to fall slightly, while those received will increase. This is another expensive cost trend, that emails are being sent as a CC to more and more people; this growing trend is one of the reasons why people receive more emails than they send.

Number of email accounts and users 2015 - 2019

Legend:
- Worldwide email accounts
- Worldwide email users
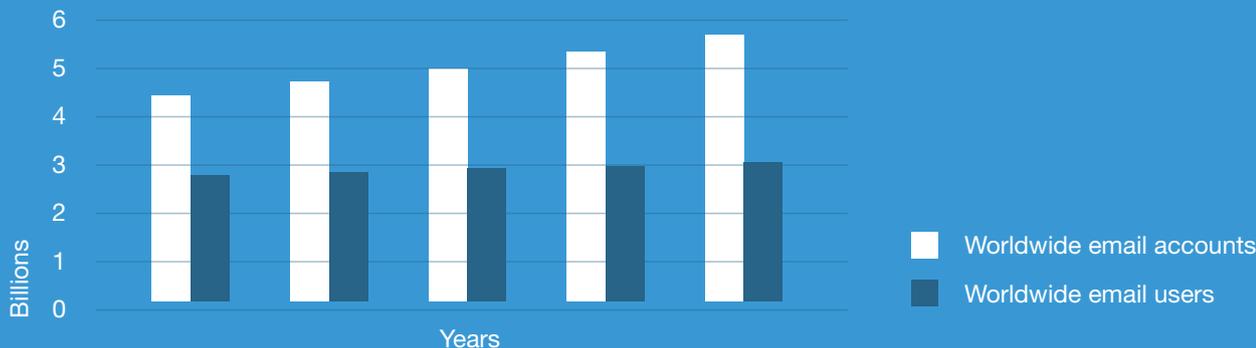
Daily email traffic 2015 - 2019

Legend:
- Consumer emails
- Business emails per day

# 75 Billion Hours Spent Checking Email in North America

Emails are used to communicate different issues that require the attention of managers and other staff. As a result, about 1 trillion files of company data are sent as attachments to emails every day in the United States. Different research studies have evaluated the effect of email on employee productivity. In a report presented by Thor Clark (2014), employees in large and medium-sized organizations receive 304 business emails weekly (quite similar to the figures from the Radicati Group) and they check their emails 36 times an hour. Employees take approximately 16 minutes to refocus on their work after handling email. As a result, there are significant productivity costs arising from business emails, whether they are necessary or unnecessary. The Radicati Group's 2015 report showed that 112 billion business emails are sent and received every day. This indicates the enormous cost that email imposes on businesses, despite being the preferred form of communication for organizations.

Email distracts employees from their work. Americans spend 75 billion hours checking their email, which directly translates into the loss of productivity and valuable work time. A study by Contatta (2014) shows that email is the second largest consumer of work hours for employees.

While email's impact on employee productivity and lost work time is significant, another important element requires consideration. Email represents a major cost to data centers and information technology infrastructure. Email consumes storage resources, email servers, and network bandwidth. This means that the way the employees disseminate information and use email for communication can influence organizational resources. In a pilot study on the possibility of using big data to reduce email traffic and the IT burden on organizations, Intel found that email traffic mostly resulted from infrastructure applications – both generic mailboxes and business applications. Business applications accounted for 45% of all emails sent and received by employees (Intel, 2015).

The second largest category of emails were those sent from external domains to Intel employees, with emails among employees forming the third largest segment. Data from Intel on the categorization of emails by region showed that the areas with the largest numbers of employees accounted for the most emails. This means emails are associated with the number of employees as well as the quantity of business or scale of operations involved in the business (Intel, 2015).

**Email Sources
- Intel, 2015**

- 37.11% External domains to Intel Employee
- 24.75% Business Applications
- 20.43% Generic Mailbox
- 14.02% Employee to employee
- 3.68% Intel Employee to External domains
- 45.18% Infrastructure Applications
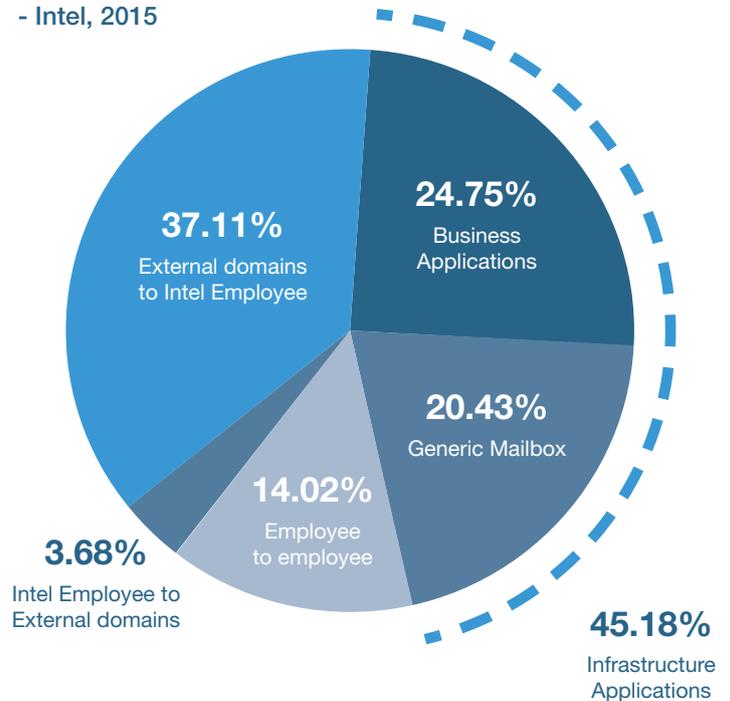
Several different reports document that one-third of the employee's day is spent on email: the conclusion is that the cost to your company and society as a whole is enormous. We all have to do something about this wasted time and expense.

**Average workweek in hours in the United States
- Thor Clark, 2014**

- 18.3 hours Time spent on role-specific tasks
- 13 hours Time spent on email
- 8.8 hours Search and gather information
- 6.4 hours Collaborate with co-workers

2.9 Billion Email Users by the End of 2019

There is no question that email is the most prevalent form of business communication. The Radicati Group's Email Statistics report indicates that the number of business and personal email users is likely to increase in the future, following observed past trends. The number of email users is projected to increase from 2.6 billion to 2.9 billion between 2015 and 2019. The report also projects that the number of individuals using email for communication will increase to about one-third of the world in 2019. The number of email accounts is expected to increase despite the growth in utilization of other methods for communication, such as social media and instant messaging. This is mainly driven by the need for users to have email accounts in order to register for these services or complete online transactions. This means the number of email accounts will grow at a slightly faster pace than the number of users.

Radicati Group projects that business email will grow at a relatively lower rate than personal email communication, although it accounts for a larger proportion of the total emails sent daily. For example, in 2015, total emails sent and received daily were 205.6 billion, of which 112.5 billion were business related and 93.1 billion were for individual consumers. The overall growth rate for email usage in the United States in 2019 is projected at 5% annually. Business email is expected to grow at a slower pace of 3% per year, while consumer email will grow at 6% (Radicati Group, 2015). The number of business emails sent and received by business users was 122 per day in 2015, and is expected to grow to 126 by 2019.

All those figures document that making changes to the use of email has the potential to reduce operating costs significantly, enable companies to work more efficiently than their competitors, increase company profits, and finally increase document security by ensuring that data is not stored in employees' personal email boxes, but rather in centralized, easily accessible storage. One method for achieving these benefits could be to move to online approval software, where files are not attached to emails and stored in individual email accounts, but rather messages are attached to a file, visible to everyone involved.

Attach file to an email message
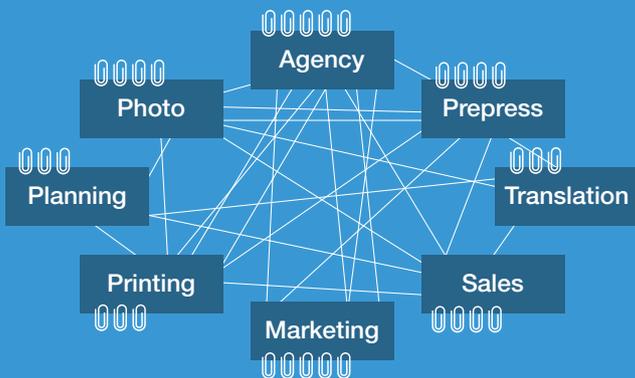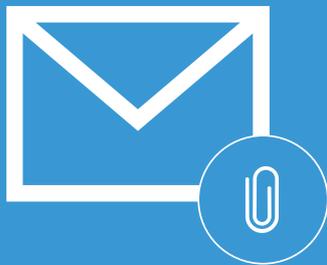
The traditional way sending files – the email is the key

Attach message to a file

Agency
Photo
Prepress
Planning
WebProof
Translation
Printing
Sales
Marketing
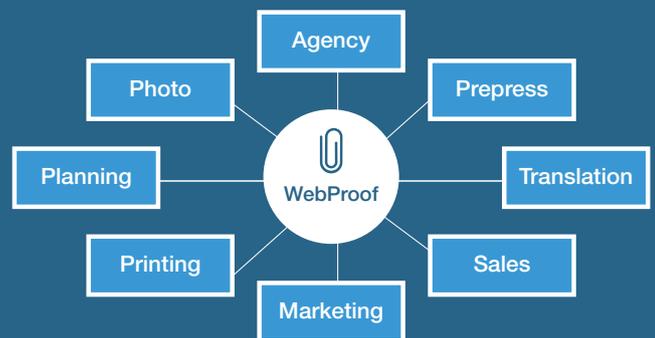
The WebProof way sending files – the file is the key

85% of Company Data is Stored in private Email Attachments
1 trillion file attachments every day
Not available for the company

More than 85% of company data is stored in email attach-ments, as highlighted by Nathaniel Borenstein in a Guardian article from 2012. This is a huge problem, because that company data is stored on individual personal emails and not centralized, so other employees who need access can't find them. There are several reasons why the volume is that high. Let me give you an example from the graphics industry. Another reason for the high volume is that more and more employees are using CC on their emails, a really bad habit.

All these email attachments and documents increase the amount of storage space necessary on the email server as well as the use of internet bandwidth for transferring such large files. Email attachments can include formal communication, such as memos and letters, design correction, and approvals, as well as authorization and queries on different products, issues, or developments. Ask your IT department: they will confirm that this massive amount of data attached to emails is a huge server problem and it is increasing. At the same time,

employees come and go, get sick, and leave the company; important company data can be buried in their unused email accounts - as recently as just two years back!

Maybe we should re-think our email communication and collaboration style: instead of attaching a file to an email message, attach the message to the file! This is why online proofing solutions have had such success, espe-cially within the graphics industry, because this industry especially suffers from huge file attachments from those who are still using emails for proofing.

> Do you have an email policy?
>
> Do you use online proofing software, which centralizes storage of your company data?

Email Attachment Size Restrictions

Email systems typically limit the size of the attachments that they can hold, send, or receive. The limits on file sizes in most email servers is 10MB, but some services-notably, Outlook -allow email attachments as large as 20MB (PointDrive, 2014). The intent of these limits is to ensure that the services of these companies can continue effectively, since they prevent large files from clogging their servers. This means attachments that are larger than the set limits have to be sent through other platforms and email may not be sufficient for sending them effectively.

Another challenge with file size limitations is that they may take a lot of time to download or upload, hence increasing the resources used. This is the reason why companies have insisted that their bandwidth be higher and higher, instead of looking for a different approach.
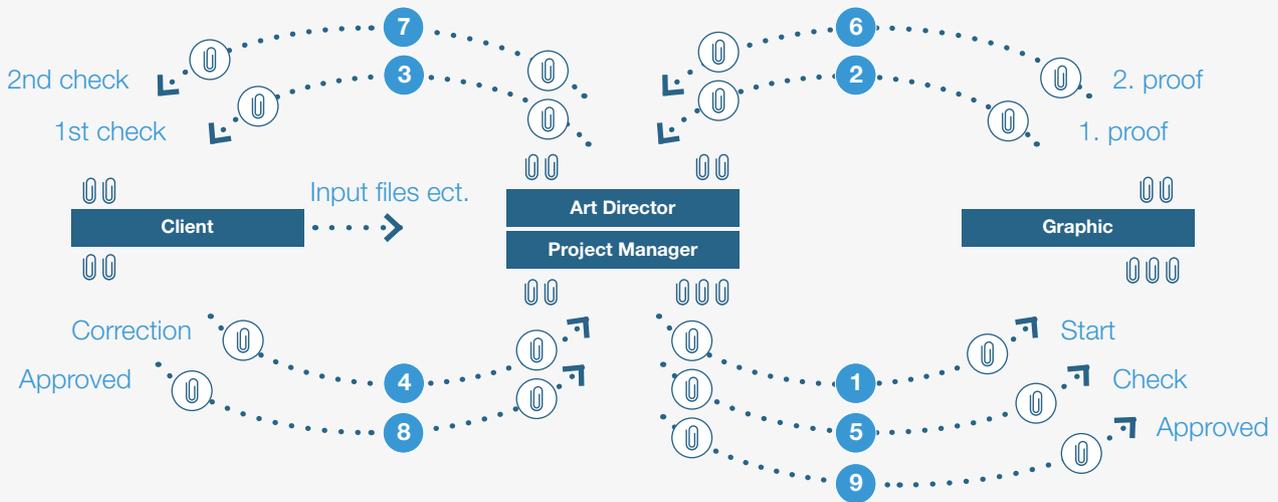
Disk Space Needs To Be Cleaned Very Frequently
Because files sent back and forth among the different parties are stored on the same server, there is a major problem of file duplication. In order to address this issue, servers have to be cleaned up or defragmented frequently to prevent wastage of server space and other resources.

Relevance of Email within the Graphics Industry

In the graphics industry, email is used at a very high level as a means of delivering design proposals and, often, different versions of documents sent forth and back between many reviewers. Email provides a platform for the different users to check and approve designs in order to make necessary corrections that respond to the needs of the reviewers before publishing the publication. Typically, huge files are attached to the emails, and the emails themselves contain lots of information about specific orders and projects. Often 3–50 reviewers are involved in the approval process for each version.

If a document is approved in a typical routing proofing flow of three people, and only one correction is done in the document for each email, it still creates 18 emails and 18 attachments, because emails are stored in both the employee's inbox and outbox. A typical campaign within graphic production, with 20 documents in 16 languages and four versions, will create at the minimum 23,000 emails and 23,000 file attachments!
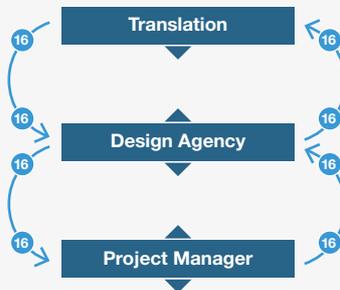
Traditional email proofing with only one correction!

2nd check
1st check
7
3

Client
Input files ect.

Art Director
Project Manager

6
2
2. proof
1. proof

Graphic

Correction
Approved
4
8

Start
Check
Approved
1
5
9

Just one correction ➔ 18 emails and 18 file attachments

A campaign in the traditional way

Typical 20 elements and 16 languages

16   Translation   16

16   Design Agency   16

16   Project Manager   16

16 PDF's x 9 x 2 (round-trip)
x 4 versions x 20 elements

↓

Requires 23.040 emails and 23.040 PDF's

2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Country Manager 1	Country Manager 2	Country Manager 3	Country Manager 4	Country Manager 5	Country Manager 6	Country Manager 7	Country Manager 8

1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Country 1	Country 2	Country 3	Country 4	Country 5	Country 6	Country 7	Country 8	Country 9	Country 10	Country 11	Country 12	Country 13	Country 14	Country 15	Country 16

The use of email as the main communication channel presents several problems that affect companies and their management. These problems range from size restrictions, time required for sorting, the need to convert files frequently, and disk space needs. This segment of the report indicates the problems that are associated with email use as a form of business communication for this use.

Using cloud storage for data and files can be used as a solution to the problem. This is why the use of file sharing solutions, CRM, and online proofing solutions is expanding. These approaches can decrease or eliminate the need to send files back and forth, because all users can access the same file from a central location. However, this may create accountability and version management challenges if anybody can access and alter files; even worse, if they are not connected to the specific project, they can be difficult to find later on.

Using online proofing software is an option that also includes centralized storage of versions and "attachments" in the cloud, significantly addressing the challenges of email overuse facing companies in the graphics industry. This approach dramatically reduces the number of emails sent back and forth. It also aligns communications, decreases the need for users to make unnecessary corrections, and saves employees lost time sorting through emails and finding required information. At the same time, all company data is stored in the centralized online proofing solution. For each project, it is always the last version/file that everyone involved, can access - files are no longer stored in each individual's personal email box. The data is secure filed and easy to find project by project.

Email versus online proofing
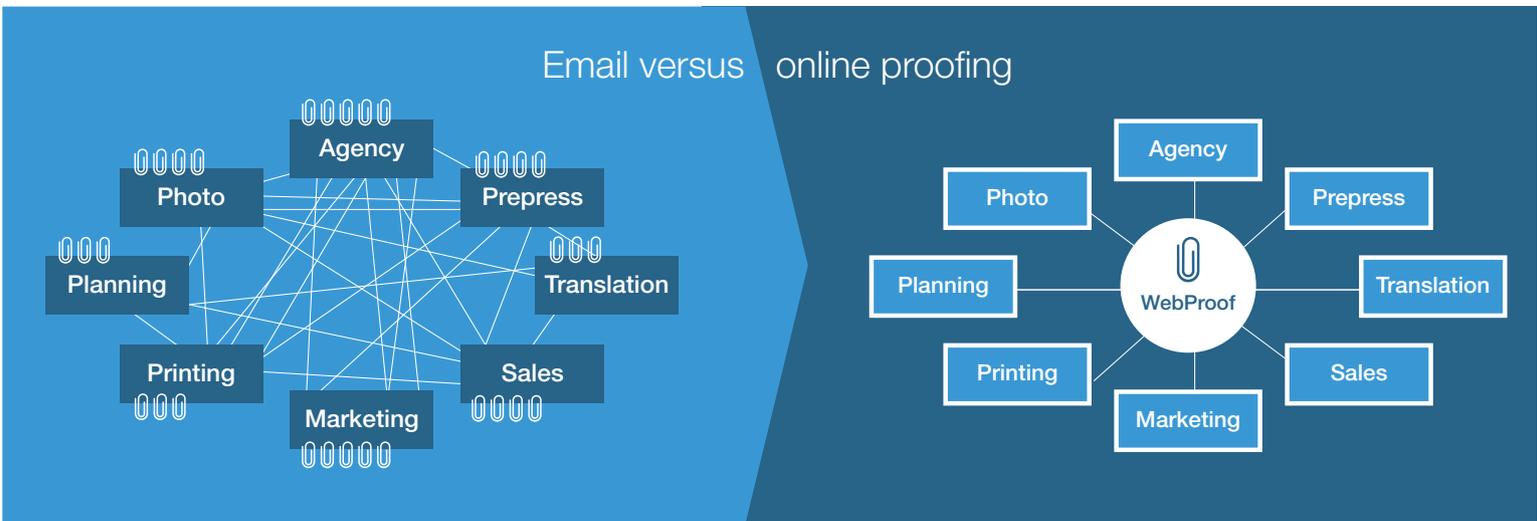
60–80% of Total Turnaround Time Is Proofing Time

Proofing and managing revisions is a major challenge for any business that relies on email as a key form of communication. This challenge is significant for the graphics industry because the relationship between the client and the agency involves so many people and business areas, all of which need access to a given file for approval, correction, or documentation. Each of these people will keep a copy of the file in their email box and may need to make corrections and send them to others for approval. Therefore at least 60–80% of the total production time per project within graphic production - is spent on proofing.

LEGO moved from email proofing and collaboration to an online proofing workflow and managed to reduce their production time by up to 35% through this shift- and as we all know, time is money. As a result of their implementation of a online proofing solution, where their proofs are stored in a centralized online location, reviewers always looked at the latest new version, everyone involved can see each other's comments, and the proofing process became transparent. All documentation and attachments were stored in a centralized message/comments section, not in each employee's private email box. Reviewers no longer had to search, sort, and manage their email boxes to find information about their projects.

Another figure is that 29% of revisions in business documents are made due to miscommunications among employees. Considering that each version of the revisions takes almost the same time to create as the original, a lot of time is lost making corrections that may not necessarily be required.

The Benefits of Online Proofing Software

- *It provides a transparent cloud-based communication platform that allows access to all authorized parties and decreases the number of project-related emails for all involved.*

- *It removes all attachments from individual employees email box, securely centralizing them in the cloud, accessible to those with access, and organized project by project.*

- *The latest versions of files are accessible to everyone so that they can highlight and mark the changes desired, and see each other's comments.*

- *Since the system is aware of the needs of different users, users get instant automatic notification when pages are ready for them to review, based on the agreed-upon routing proofing workflow.*

- *The system reduces the time spent by individual employees sorting emails, as well as the IT resources needed to store huge amount of duplicate files.*

- *It also reduces production time, saving on labor and increasing customer satisfaction.*

- *Some online proofing solutions also offer advanced workflow features that can automate all the file handling and production, resulting in huge savings.*

I hope this data and the attached articles and statistics have convinced you to take action at your company. This white paper shows that it is quite easy to release and reduce the 28% of the time your employees spend on emails so they can do other things. Furthermore, you can eliminate file attachments from your employees' email boxes, to be stored project by project in an online proofing solution. Just as LEGO did, you can reduce project approval turnaround time by as much as 35% – and, time is money.

Attach file
to an email message

Attach message
to a file

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