

Bynari Insight Server

Understanding

The Texan software manufacturers Bynari can look back on years of experience in connecting Outlook clients to their own server products. The latest version requires some skills, but with its modular structure it is powerful.

BY THOMAS GRAHAMMER

Having said that, Insight Server is based on tried and trusted components, such as Exim and Cyrus IMAP. The product's strong points are its spam filters and anti-virus protection.

The Bynari Insight Groupware server that we looked into in the Linux Magazine labs was as TGZ file containing version 3.5.4. A quick glance at the readme file told us that some preparatory steps would be required. In this respect, the product assumes a higher skill level than Communicate Pro, for example.

The admin user is expected to disable the FTP, Mail, HTTP, POP3 and other system services that may be running on the server. Otherwise “./setup” quits with an error message.

After successfully launching the setup routine and answering a few prompts, a message soon appears telling you that

the Web interface is now available. The interface uses the standard HTTP port 80, of course this is not to the liking of other Web servers on the machine.

Third Party

A closer look at the thin looking 104 page manual reveals that Insight Server is made up of a number of third party modules. It uses Cyrus IMAP and the Exim Mail Transport Agent (MTA), for example. You will also discover that both an HTTP daemon (Apache) and Proftp are running.

Most administrative tasks can be performed using the Web interface – and in fact this is Bynari's biggest contribution to the product, as Insight Server is a bundle of third party products linked by a Web interface when you get down to nitty gritty. Figure 1 shows the structure of Insight Server and its individual components.



Exim is one of the better known modules. As most distributions expect you to perform hardcore configuration of Exim by editing the configuration files, you might be quite happy with what appears to be an intuitive front-end at first glance. A closer look reveals that the Web interface could be far more intuitive.

The “Basic Configuration” area allows you to enter basic setup information, such as host names, domains and relay domains. The “Performance Options” that can considerably boost Exim's performance are also of interest. This is where you can set the maximum size for mail and the maximum spool space, for example. Interested admins should also look into the “Advanced Options” that permit further fine tuning. This is where you specify the default LDAP server, rejects, and error messages. The “Log Options” allow you to specify the size of the logfiles.

No Spam

Thanks to Exim, Insight Server can handle a Realtime Blackhole List (RBL). This allows active spam prevention via a list

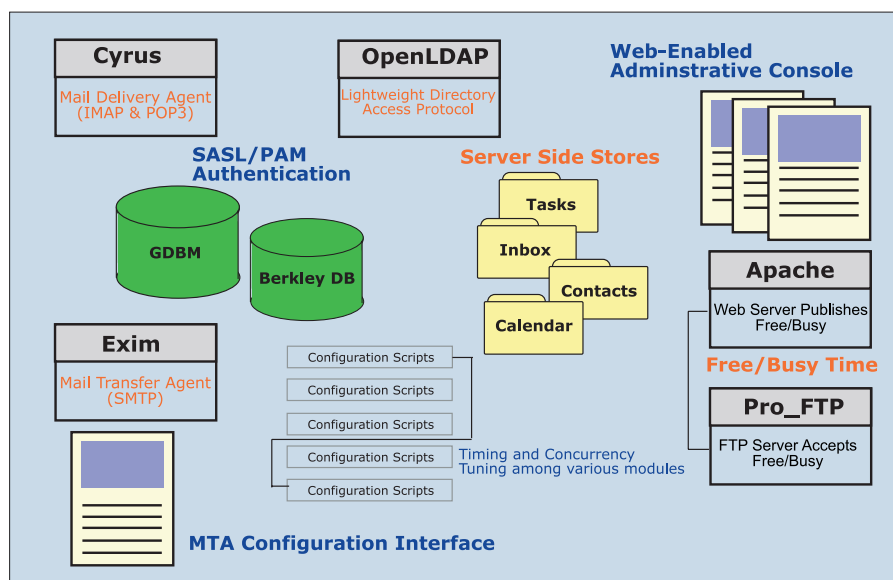


Figure 1: Structure of the Bynari Insight Server system

Insight Server 3.5.4

Manufacturer:	Bynari
Internet:	http://www.bynari.com
Prices (approximate guide prices):	
Family Standard Edition	
for up to 25 Users	US \$600
25 + Users	US \$500 extra
100 + Users	US \$1,950 extra
500 + Users	US \$9,500 extra
1000 + Users	US \$18,000 extra
Prices for IBM	
i- and z-Series	on request

that is managed and updated on remote central servers. To do so, you add the domains and hosts responsible for maintaining the list under “RBL Options”.

Exim filters provide additional spam protection. Make sure that you know what you are doing, before you start changing the defaults; the wide range of options may cause inexperienced admins to apply filters that prevent any mail whatsoever getting through to their users.

Another interesting feature that Exim offers is granular configuration of its SMTP options. System administrators can set the maximum “Alive time” and “Receive timeout”, for example.

Although there is no real reason to change the defaults, which seem to be perfectly okay for most sites.

Finally, you can also influence how Insight Server handles messages, adding a header to received messages, or specifying the maximum number of headers to accept simultaneously, for example. In general, the Insight Server interface allows full control of Exim, and is easy to use.

Reduced Danger of Viruses

Thanks to RAV there is virtually no risk of viruses attacking Insight Server. Unfortunately, Bynari only include a 60 day trial version of the RAV Antivirus

package. The “RAV Setup” allows you to configure RAV (see Figure 3). The interesting thing is that “RAV Action Configuration” not only allows you to specify what action to take in case of virus attacks, but also to define actions of your own. “RAV Groups Configuration” is used to map the action to a group, as RAV handles incoming mail by reference to groups.

This is also where you define when and how the system scans incoming mail, and what to do in case of virus infections. There are numerous possibilities: from warning the recipient, warning the sender, or secretly disposing of the message – you can even create groups for

SCO Office Mail Server 2.0

The brand new 2.0 version of SCO Office Mail Server (formerly Volution Messaging Server) reached our labs after close of press and too late for a real test. Our first impressions are based on the comprehensive HTML and PDF documentation that accompanies the product. Besides a user guide, SCO Office Mail Server 2.0 also includes a step-by-step introduction, and an administrator's guide on CD. The product provides language support for English, French, German, Italian, Polish, and Spanish.

SCO Office Mail Server 2.0 can be installed on SCO Linux distributions, United Linux, and UnixWare 7.1.3, where a Linux Kernel Personality is required. The manufacturer claims that the product can support up to 2500 simultaneous users running on standard hardware.

The Webmail client, Horde IMP 3.1, and an updated SCO Office Mail Connector for Microsoft Outlook, are the most important new features. Although an additional per client license fee is levied for the latter, it does provide the added benefits of shared folders, group calendaring and other groupware functions.

New Components

The documentation emphasizes the new IMAP server (Cyrus 2.1.0). The other components are:

- Postfix Mail Transport Agent (MTA)
- Cyrus Message Store
- Apache Web server for the admin interface
- Authentication and administration via OpenLDAP

Thanks to Cyrus Message Store, mail users do not need an account on the server; Cyrus uses

OpenLDAP and the LDAP PAM module to authenticate users.

Numerous admin tools are provided; over 30 special command line programs allow the admin user to create mail users, modify ACLs, query calendar information, or specify passwords. SCO also provide a Web front-end for admins who prefer not to use the command line, and of course Webmin is available for Linux system administration. A user account is comprised of:

- General info, such as name, password, and phone
- Email address with additional parameters (such as mail forwarding)
- Cyrus Inbox
- Auto reply functions (vacation mail handling)
- Spam filter with Realtime Blackhole List
- Quotas
- Simple Mailing lists (aliases)

The software does not provide a backup function of its own; the admin guide refers you to standard tools, such as tar, cpio and afio. The server also provides programs that create a configuration for various Outlook versions. The Web application offers detailed descriptions of the user settings required to support Netscape, Eudora, Kmail, and IMP.

Security

Open Mail Server requires POP before SMTP by default: users are not permitted to send mail via the SMTP server without first accessing their mailbox via POP or IMAP. Thus, the server prevents misuse as an open relay, at the same time allowing SMTP server access to users in different networks.

SCO do not provide any antivirus software, although it is easy to add this facility later, as Postfix provides the “content_filter” interface for external scanners. The admin guide describes the required steps. SSL encrypted connections are envisaged for Web server access; and both the IMAP and POP servers can be secured using SSL.

SCO Office Mail Connector

The SCO Office Mail Connector allows users with Microsoft Outlook versions 97 through XP to leverage functionality otherwise provided by an Exchange Server. The manual emphasizes the following features:

- shared global address books
- shared message folders
- shared contacts
- shared calendaring
- delegation of calendaring and folders
- shared form libraries

Additionally, the Connector displays a toolbar that allows users to configure their email accounts, select folder options, share folders, and define access privileges for folders.

The user guide also describes a simple migration path for Exchange emigrants. After installing the SCO software, Outlook clients can access both servers. Users can then copy their folders from their Exchange mailboxes to their mailboxes on the SCO Open Mail Server. To replace the global address lists provided by Microsoft Exchange, SCO provides an LDAP client for Microsoft Outlook.

Pricing for Office Mail Server will be based on the number of clients logged; details of which were not available before going to press.

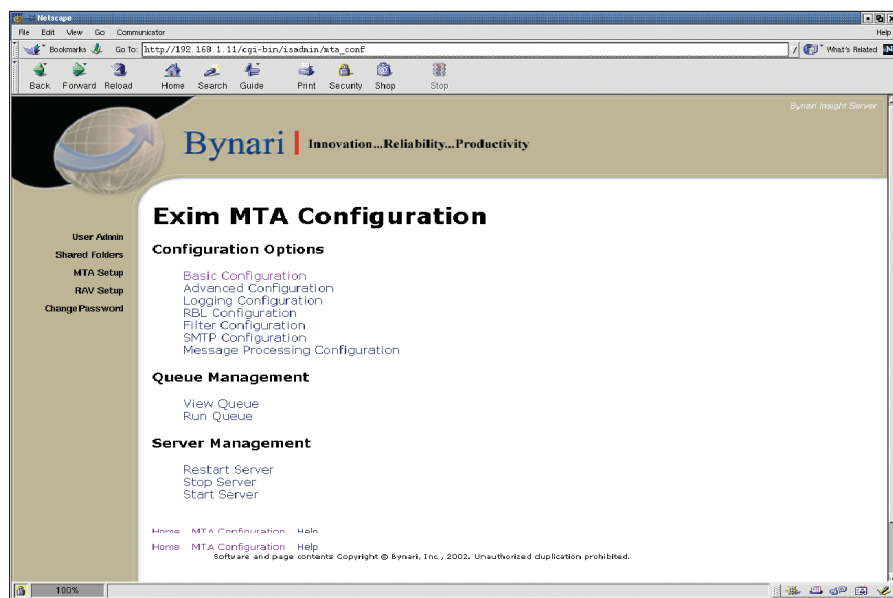


Figure 2: Exim Web configuration interface

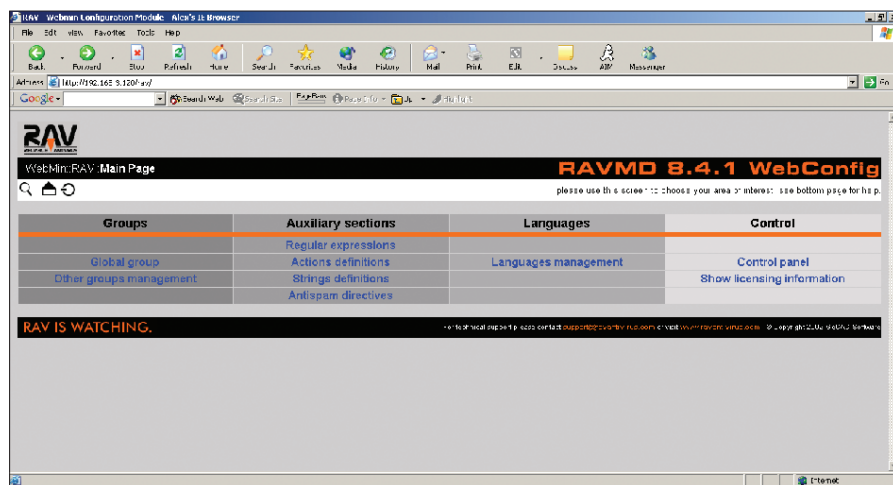


Figure 3: RAV configuration. Unfortunately, this is only a 60 day trial version

Exchange Migration

A few tricks allow Insight Server to import user information from Exchange 5.5. The following command imports data from the Exchange Server with the IP address 192.168.1.13:

```
mail:/home/tom # ldapsearch -L -h
192.168.1.13 "uid=*" > exchange.ldf
```

Add the following syntax to restrict the fields imported from the Exchange Server's repository, possibly because you intend to replace some data:

```
mail:/home/tom # ldapsearch -L -h
192.168.1.13 "uid=*" objectclass cn rdn
Company uid givenName mail > exchange.ldf
```

The fields quoted here are for reference only, you will want to specify the fields you intend to import. After creating an Exchange Server data file, you may need to convert the data to Bynari LDAP format using the "dn:" parameter. Then type "ldapadd" (or "ldapmodifi" if the second line of each entry contains "changetype: add"):

```
mail:/exchangedata # ldapadd -cv -D
"cn=manager, c=US" -w Password -f
exchange.ldf
```

These steps import the Exchange Server user database to Insight Server. You will need to tell the Cyrus mail server all about this. Pass a tcl file to the "cyradm" command to tell Cyrus about the userbase (later Cyrus versions will expect a Perl script).

individual domains to provide distinct mail handling within your own Intranet in contrast to normal Internet mail.

The Web interface is not really necessary for user management; the admin user can perform all the relevant tasks manually, as Bynari uses Open LDAP and Cyrus for address and mail handling.

An LDIF file (LDAP Directory Information File) is used to store the configuration. The file format is quite simple: the parameters are stored with their current values in a single line. Unfortunately, there does not seem to be any way to import multiple users simultaneously.

Admins who have not lost their programming skills are advised to consult the readme files and the FAQ, and then write a few tools to export the LDIF file from another file or from a database and pass it to Insight Server.

Chop and Change

This allows Insight Server to import user information from Exchange 5.5 – although the procedure is not exactly trivial. The initial steps are described in the "Exchange Migration" box. The procedure described in the insert will not work for Exchange 2000, however, although the Insight Server manual does explain how to handle Exchange 2000 data.

Conclusion

Bynari Insight Server is a useful and well-thought out product that provides Web interface based administration, although it is not always easy to use. One advantage that Insight Server has in comparison to its competitors is its modular structure which allows you to replace individual modules when updating.

THE AUTHOR

Thomas Grahammer has a degree in Computer Science, and has years of experience in system administration and programming. In the summer of 2002 he started up his own software company way down in the South of Bavaria. His main interests are LAMP programming and Linux administration.

