

What's New

Archive Attender 4[®] *for Microsoft Exchange*



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What's New with Archive Attender®

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Overview

In Archive Attender version 4, Sherpa has introduced a new application architecture that has been designed to strengthen the stability and scalability of the product. In previous versions of Archive Attender all processing was managed by a single component, the Archive Attender for Exchange service. While this approach made the product easy to deploy, it also became a bottleneck as the number of users, amount of archived data and volume of retrieval requests grew. Archive Attender 4 solves this problem with an innovative new modular approach to the application architecture.

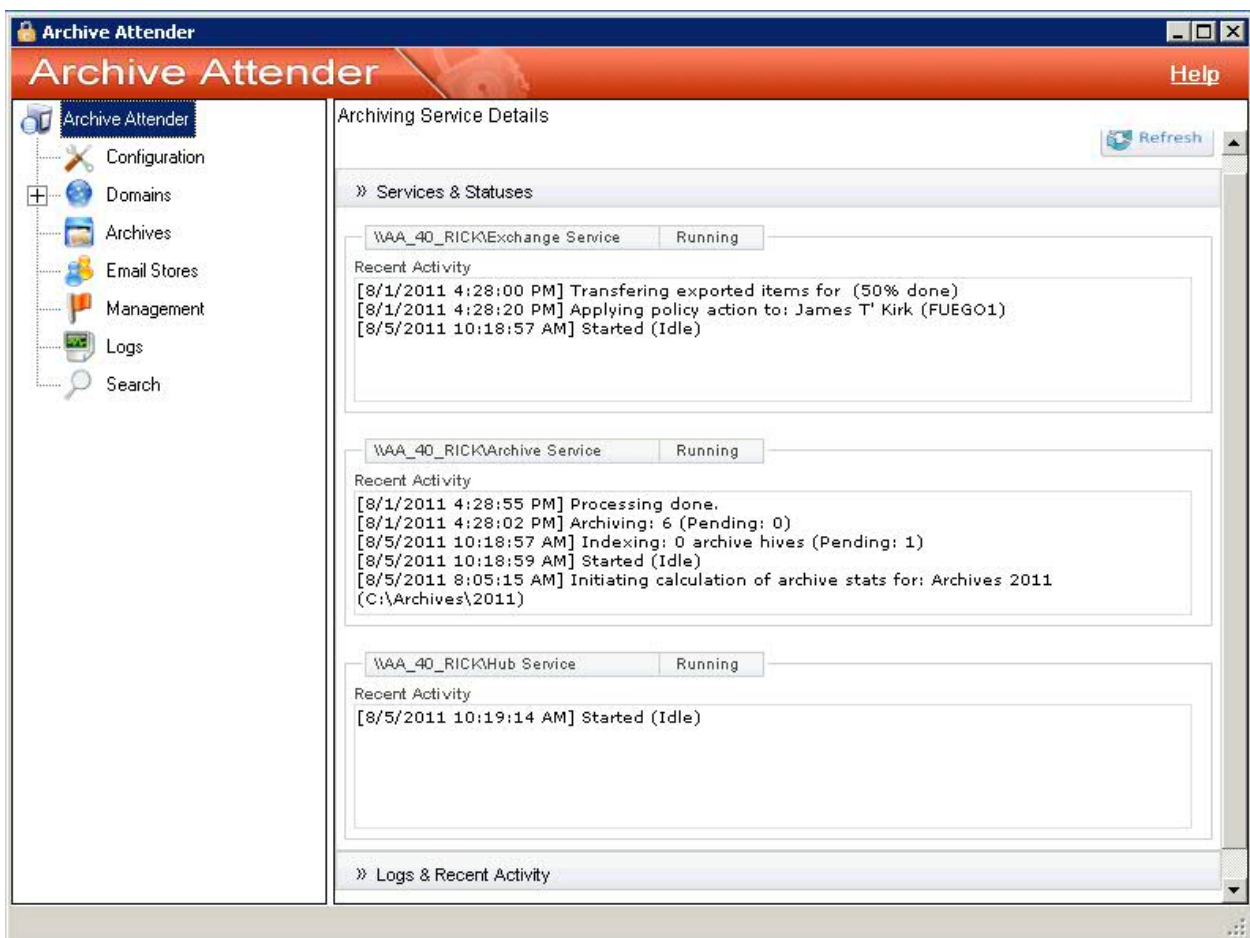


Figure 1: The Archive Attender 4 console

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Product Architecture

The new designed product architecture splits the management of various tasks into multiple service components (as depicted in the following diagram) to alleviate the bottleneck created by a single service architecture.

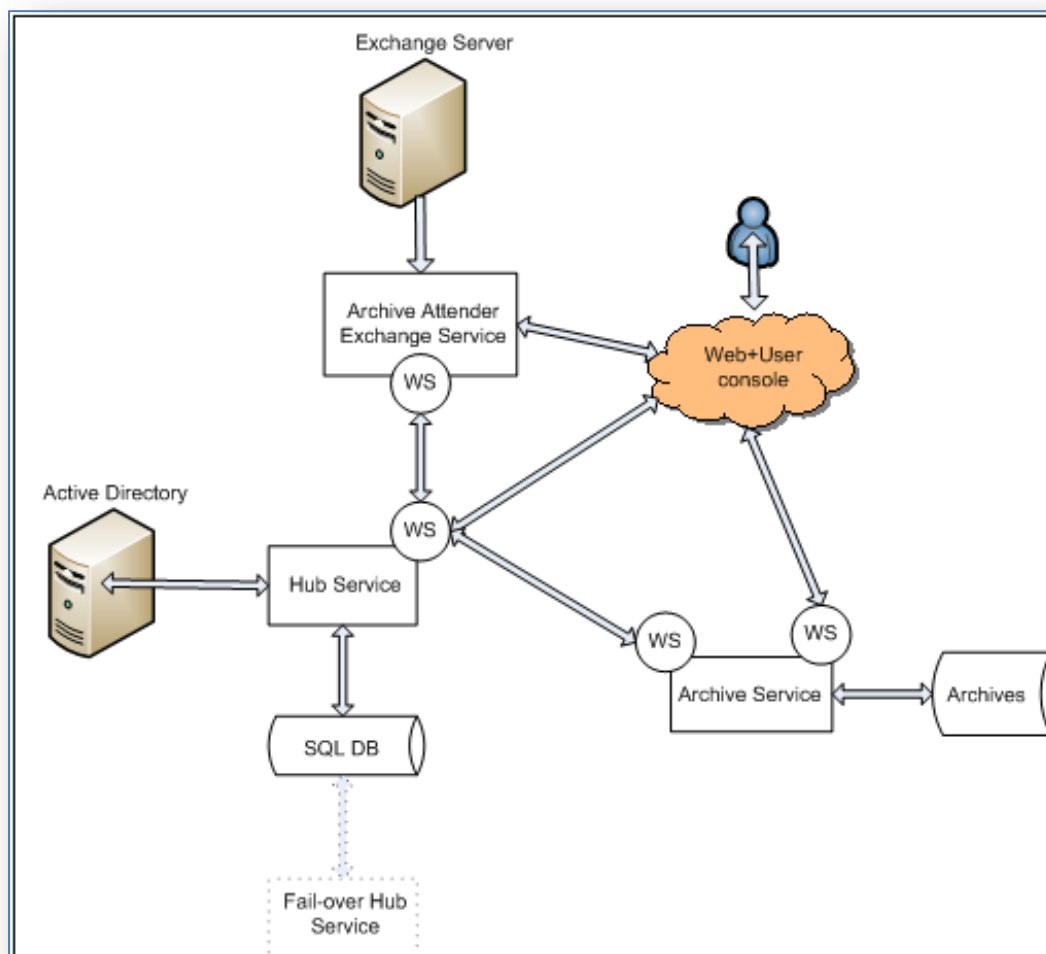


Figure 2: The Archive Attender 4 architecture block diagram

Archive Attender 4 Service Components

Hub Service

This component serves as the central hub service of the entire application and the sole connection to the SQL Server database. In addition to handling all database requests, the hub service provides access to Active Directory, retrieving user, group and other information when needed.

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Exchange Service

This service is responsible for initiating and managing all activities related to the mail stores (Exchange mailboxes and network PST files) including:

- Capturing messages to be archived
- Converting original messages in the mail stores, after they are archived, to the selected action (for example message stubs)
- Restoring messages from the archive to the mail store

The Exchange Service will communicate directly with the database using the Archive Attender API to retrieve and update information and will use the communication library to transfer and request data to and from the appropriate Archive Service.

Archive Service

This service is responsible for all activities dealing with the data stored in the archives. An instance of the Archive Service can manage one or more archive locations and each installation of Archive Attender will support multiple instances of the Archive Service. The responsibilities of the Archive Service are:

- Storing messages in the archive locations
- Building and periodically maintaining the map and search indexes
- Retrieving requested messages from the archives
- Performing searches of the archives and returning results
- Completing configured maintenance of the archived data
- Managing the hold of archived messages

The Archive Service communicates with the Hub Service to retrieve all necessary configuration information from the database. Additionally, it will encompass two web services, which will be used by the other Archive Attender components to transmit and request information and messages to and from the archive locations managed by the Archive Service. One web service will be used exclusively to handle transmission of tasks that need to be performed by the Archive Service; the second web service will be available exclusively to perform searches of and to retrieve messages from the archives maintained by the Archive Service.

Additional Components

Database Details

All configuration data in Archive Attender 4 will be stored in a central SQL database. In some cases, such as with policies, the current XML configuration documents can be stored in the database as a blob along with some properties as additional columns in the database table. In other cases, all properties will be stored in the database as individual columns. All components (the administrator console, the Archive Attender Exchange Service and the new Archive Service) access the database directly using the Archive Attender API.

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Communication

Communication between the services described above will be handled through Windows Communication Foundation. Each of the services will expose a web service that will be used to facilitate the communication between the components. The web services will all share a uniform framework but each will contain interfaces to meet the specific requirements of each of the service components.

Archive Storage

The storage mechanism for archived data is virtually unchanged in version 4 so no archive data conversion will be required for existing customers. Messages will continue to be stored as compressed .MSG files accompanied by a metadata XML files. Moving forward the metadata XML will be named with the message GUID for uniqueness (instead of the current meta.xml naming convention), but this change will not impact archived created in previous versions of the product.

Enhanced Outlook Integration

For customers who wish to provide a more seamless end-user interface for Outlook, there will be an optional Outlook Plugin available for Archive Attender 4. This component will communicate with the archives to seamlessly display archived messages within the Outlook client without the need to click a message stub.

Availability

Archive Attender 4 will also feature enhancements to current features which your Sherpa sales contact will pass along soon. The product is in the final stages of unit testing and will be entering beta test in Q3 of 2011. We expect the product to be ready for release by year end.