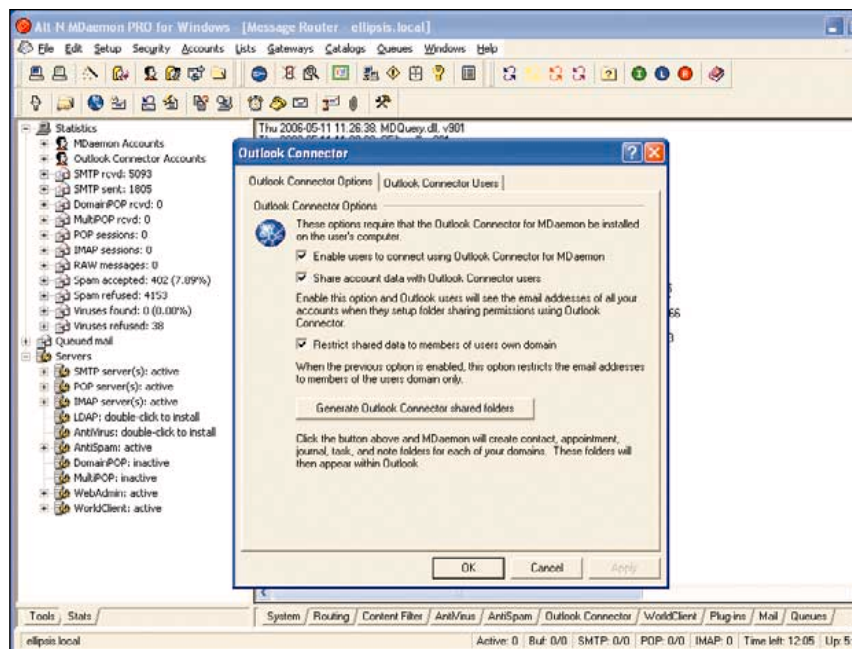


SMTP EMAIL SERVER

Alt - N MDAemon Pro v9.0

Bigger, better, closer to Microsoft Exchange – and cheaper, too



Outlook Connector helps provide seamless integration with Microsoft's Outlook client

Popular with small businesses as a simpler, more affordable alternative to Microsoft's Exchange email server, the latest version of MDAemon Pro majors on performance and security improvements along with enhancements to the already comprehensive groupware capabilities.

The performance benefits will be felt most by companies needing to handle large volumes of mail, but those using Imap mail and the web-based World Client software will also benefit. Most of the message-handling processes are now multithreaded, along with those supporting the anti-virus, spam and content-filtering options, with significant throughput gains to be had, especially on multiprocessor and multicore platforms. However, even on a modest, single-processor server, the extra speed is evident and worth having.

Also evident are changes to the MDAemon Outlook Connector, an optional add-on (from £70.59 ex VAT for six users) which enhances the built-in groupware functionality to provide seamless integration with Microsoft's Outlook client. This also gets a performance makeover along with functionality enhancements to make the end result a lot more Exchange-like.

As with Exchange, the Outlook Connector stores data on the mail server itself rather than a local PST file. This data can also be shared by the web-based client, with the Outlook Connector also providing native support for the various collaboration features otherwise only available when using Outlook with a Microsoft server. That means the ability to share contacts, calendars, notes and other folders and now, with MDAemon v9.0, an integrated 'free/busy' service to enable users to check on other people's availability when scheduling meetings.

An out-of-office button allows users to set up automated responses. A couple of omissions need to be addressed to fully emulate an Exchange setup, such as support for contact categories, which will be added in another update later this year.

On the security front, MDAemon has always been a leader, with an integrated, Kaspersky-based, anti-virus scanner (updates from £67.65 ex VAT per year), support for SSL message encryption and a range of anti-spam and content-filtering options. There is also enhanced support for emerging anti-spoofing and anti-phishing technologies. Most notable is the Sender ID initiative, whereby sender IP addresses are checked to make sure they match those of the purported domain.

An integrated SyncML interface enables smartphone and PDA users to synchronise handheld data directly without third-party tools. Web Admin, the browser-based management console (previously a free download), is now integrated into the main package. You can also configure MDAemon to synchronise user accounts against Active Directory.

Management remains the Achilles' heel of this package which, if you take advantage of everything, can be complicated to set up and administer. Troubleshooting isn't easy, although MDAemon is a very stable platform that, by sticking to open email standards, rarely runs into trouble. You get a huge amount of functionality for a lot less than the cost of deploying Exchange and, most of the time, MDAemon is easier to manage.

Existing customers who have paid for support will get the MDAemon v9.0 upgrade free, while small businesses looking to buy for the first time will find that it compares well with Exchange and other Windows SMTP solutions.

Alan Stevens

Details

Price From £262.65

(£223.53 ex VAT) for six users

Contact Distributor Zen Software
0845 085 9058

www.zensoftware.co.uk

local suppliers:

www.zensoftware.co.uk/partners

System requirements 500MHz Pentium III host (Pentium 4 2.4GHz or higher recommended) • 512MB of memory (1GB recommended) • 100MB disk space plus additional space for mail storage • Windows XP/2000/2003 • Internet Explorer 5.5 or later

Verdict

Pros Significant performance enhancements; integrated free/busy service; Active Directory synchronisation; integrated web-based management
Cons Can be complicated to manage and to troubleshoot problems; Outlook groupware functionality still not quite as seamless as with Exchange

Features ★★★★★

Ease of use ★★★★★

Value for money ★★★★★

Overall Cheaper and easier than Exchange and now with almost as much functionality

★★★★★