

VisNetic MailFlow Deployment Guide

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Introduction

This guide discusses various deployment options for Deerfield.com's VisNetic MailFlow.

Section 1 - Email Services

In order to effectively route and manage inbound email messages, VisNetic MailFlow must first be able to retrieve them. One of the great advantages of VisNetic MailFlow is its ability to retrieve email from any standard POP3 email account, *regardless of where it is hosted or what mail server platform is used*.

In VisNetic MailFlow, each individual POP3 email account is known as a *message source*. Message sources can reside anywhere, and VisNetic MailFlow will support an unlimited number of them.

For example, if your organization relies on a local ISP for Internet connectivity, you might also rely on them for email. In this case, you're likely to have one or more "generic" POP3 email accounts (e.g. *sales@yourisp.net*, *support@yourisp.net*, etc.) hosted by your ISP. This is easily supported by VisNetic MailFlow; create one message source for each POP3 email account, using the email server address (i.e. *mail.yourisp.net*) along with the username & password for the POP3 email account (see **figure 1** below).

Figure 1 - Creating a new message source in VisNetic MailFlow

When VisNetic MailFlow collects messages from these POP3 accounts, it will route them either according to the specialized routing rules you create, or will direct them into a ticketbox with a matching default email address.

Another common scenario is one in which the organization deploying VisNetic MailFlow has a dedicated mail server running internally. Again, this could be any mail server platform, including VisNetic MailServer, Microsoft Exchange, or any other that supports collection of email messages via POP3 (nearly all do).

When a mail server is available within the organization, it might be configured to forward multiple, similar email addresses to a single POP3 inbox (see **figure 2** below). This is also handled readily by VisNetic MailFlow; simply configure MailFlow to collect mail from the destination POP3 email account(s), and then configure routing rules to match according to the message recipients (as designated by the “to” address).

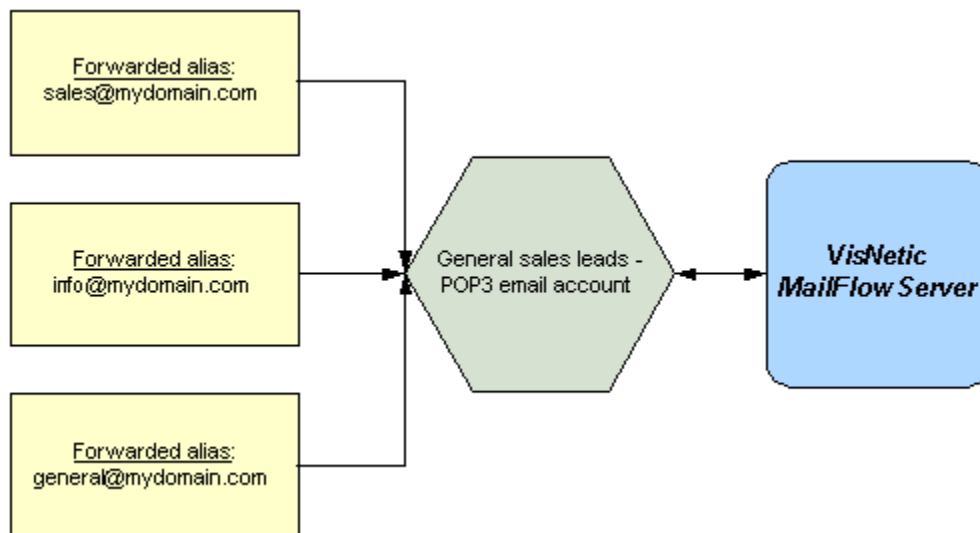


Figure 2 - Mail Forwarding Scenario

Other, more complex forwarding scenarios are also handled gracefully by VisNetic MailFlow.

Section 2 - Database Services

VisNetic MailFlow stores nearly all of its data, including messages and configuration data, in an ODBC-compliant database.¹ This means that a database server platform must be available at all times in order for VisNetic MailFlow to function.

VisNetic MailFlow presently supports two database platforms, one of which is available for free:

¹ The only exceptions are made for logging and attachment files, which are stored in the file system.

1. Microsoft SQL Server 7 or 2000
2. Microsoft Data Engine (MSDE) 7 or 2000

The latter of these two options (MSDE) is a free, lightweight version of the MS SQL Server database engine that is suitable for smaller VisNetic MailFlow deployments (3-6 users, with light to moderate email loads). It can be downloaded and installed with the MSDE version of the VisNetic MailFlow product installer.

For organizations with six or more VisNetic MailFlow users and moderate to heavy email loads, Microsoft SQL Server is recommended.

Please note that it's also fairly simple for an organization to start out using the MSDE version of VisNetic MailFlow, and then upsize to MS SQL Server at a later time (when email volume warrants it). Microsoft offers a free, easy-to-use migration tool for this very purpose.

Regardless of which of these database platforms is used, the VisNetic MailFlow product installer makes configuration of the database seamless and simple. There's also no need to interact directly with the database server once VisNetic MailFlow is installed; it transparently manages the database connection and provides backup, archiving, and purging functionality directly from within the VisNetic MailFlow administration console.

Finally, the VisNetic MailFlow database can be run on the same machine as the VisNetic MailFlow engine, or anywhere on the local network accessible to it. The VisNetic MailFlow product installer supports both scenarios.

Section 3 – Web Services

VisNetic MailFlow's powerful, intuitive interface is entirely web-based. This allows end users and administrators to access VisNetic MailFlow from any location that has an Internet connection.

VisNetic MailFlow currently supports two different web server platforms, one of which is available for free:

1. Microsoft Internet Information Services (IIS) 5.0 or greater
2. Deerfield.com's VisNetic Website 3.1 or greater

Microsoft IIS 5.0 is available for free, and runs on Windows 2000 (Pro, Server, Advanced) and XP (Pro and Server). Both IIS and VisNetic Website are excellent solutions that provide the level of ISAPI extension support required for VisNetic MailFlow to operate successfully. We recommend that you choose the web server platform that best suits your internal security and budgetary guidelines.

As with the database server platform, VisNetic MailFlow will configure your web server of choice during the product installation. No additional configuration is required once the installation is completed.

Please note that the VisNetic MailFlow server engine must be installed on the same machine as the web server.

Section 4 – Service Distribution

Only the web server and the VisNetic MailFlow server engine must be run together on the *same* machine. The database server may be installed on any part of the network directly accessible to the VisNetic MailFlow engine, though a fast connection (e.g. 10Mbps or greater) is recommended for maximum performance. Mail services can be provided by any mail server platform, and can be hosted locally (on the same machine or network) or anywhere on the Internet.

It is also entirely feasible to run any combination of the web server, mail server, database server, and VisNetic MailFlow server components on the same computer. Here are a couple of common deployment scenarios:

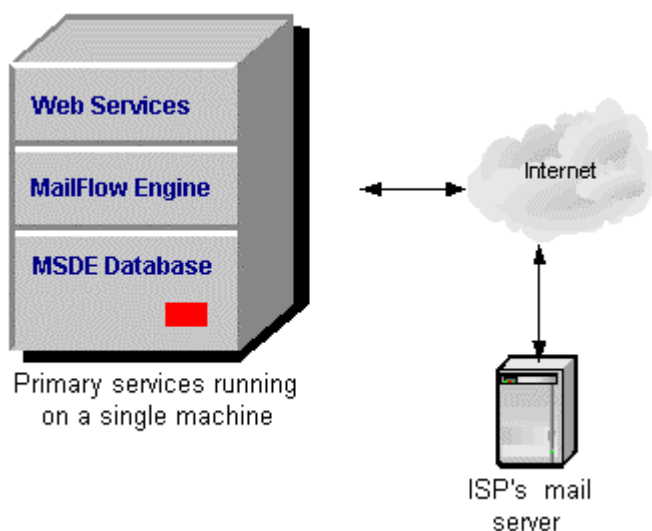


Figure 3 - VisNetic MailFlow Deployment Scenario #1

In the scenario illustrated by **figure 3** above, the primary services are all run on the same machine, while an ISP accessible via the Internet provides email services.

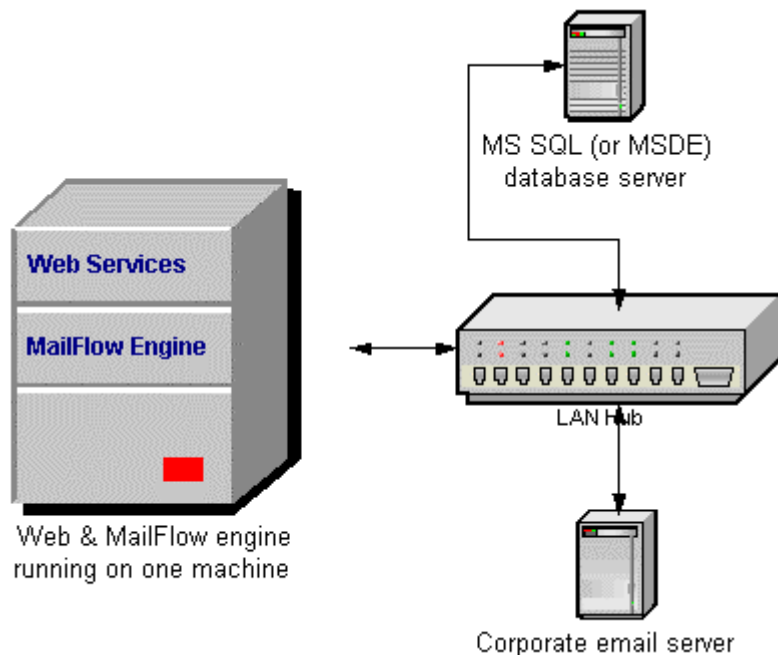


Figure 4 - VisNetic MailFlow Deployment Scenario #2

In **figure 4**, the VisNetic MailFlow server engine and the web server are installed on the same machine, while the database server and corporate email server are installed on separate machines on the same local area network.

These are but two examples; other service distribution scenarios are certainly possible.

Section 5 – Clients

VisNetic MailFlow has only one requirement for end users and administrators accessing the system; they must have Microsoft Internet Explorer 5.5 or later installed.

There are no additional client requirements; any Windows operating system supporting this web browser will work.

Section 6 – Requirements Summary

This section provides a summary of requirements for VisNetic MailFlow.

VisNetic MailFlow Server:

- **Operating System:** Windows 2000 Pro, Server, Advanced Server or XP Pro
- **Memory:** 256MB minimum, 512MB or more recommended
- **CPU:** Pentium II 450 MHz or better recommended
- **Disk Space:**

- 5M Hard Disk space for VisNetic MailFlow installation files
 - Additional disk space for email attachment files
 - Additional disk space for logging, dependent upon configuration
- **Web Server:** Website Pro 3.1 or greater **or** Microsoft IIS 5.0 or greater

Database Requirements:

- **Either of the following:**
 - Microsoft SQL Server 7 or 2000
 - Microsoft Data Engine (MSDE) 7 or 2000 (included free in the bundled download) *
- **Storage requirements:**
 - Avg. 4k per message per thread stored in database (e.g.; 1000 threads in a month with 4 messages per thread = 16M)

** **Note:** MSDE is a free, light-weight version of MS SQL Server, and is primarily suitable for sites with relatively light email loads and 3-6 users. Larger installations should use MS SQL Server 7 or 2000.*

Client Requirements:

- **Web Browser:** Microsoft Internet Explorer 5.5 or greater
- **Operating System:** Any Windows operating system that supports Internet Explorer 5.5 or above (Windows 95 / 98 / ME / NT / Win2k / XP).
- **Disk Space:** No additional software components are installed on the client