

Microsoft SPLA Reporting for Exchange Best Practices



Hosting Controller Whitepaper

www.hostingcontroller.com

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Overview

Microsoft offers a SPLA (Service Provider License Agreement) that service providers offering hosted services of MS Exchange and related products to their customers can use to pay for what they use.

This brings their CapEx on licensing the products down to zero and puts their OpEx in line with their revenue, where OpEx increases and decreases with revenue. This also makes the cost of sales predictable for them and helps them better align their pricing policies with better visibility into their cost structure.

Microsoft has put minimal requirements to become an SPLA approved Service Provider and practically any size company can get SPLA status easily.

Reporting Requirements

With CapEx going to zero, Service Providers need to provide monthly reporting for what they use and make payment accordingly. Microsoft mentions the following requirements on their SPLA program:

Provide monthly reporting on and payment for software licenses. Service providers must submit a monthly usage report or zero usage report on all licenses that they have authorized their customers to use the previous month. Affiliates or software services resellers must also be included in their report.

What is involved in this reporting?

SPLA monthly reporting is required by all Service Providers who have an SPLA account with Microsoft. The report needs to be submitted to an authorized reseller. As of this writing approved resellers are:

- DELL
- HP
- Ingram Micro
- Insight
- Soft Choice
- SHI

The monthly report needs to be on an approved format acceptable to the Reseller that you have an account with and need to report the total number of licenses used by the customers in the previous month.

Processor or Subscriber licenses

Microsoft offers two main types of licensing such as:

1. Processor based
2. Subscriber based

Processor licensing is easier to maintain but is usually more costly than the subscriber based license. Plus it is not in line with the pay as you use model and may cost the Service Provider additional sums till their network has crossed a certain usage boundary. For this reason, most Service Providers choose to go through the Subscriber Based licensing and prefer to report all usage monthly.

Generating Reports

Generating detailed usage reports complying with the Microsoft requirements can be a tedious and error prone process if done manually. Some sort of automation needs to go into the process to avoid all manual errors.

The best place to generate all these reports is through your provisioning engine. The provisioning engine is already provisioning all resources and is in best position to have the required 360° view to generate these reports.

Hosting Controller SPLA Report Generation

Hosting Controller is a full service automation tool for Hosted Exchange providers. In addition to provisioning new instances and providing a complete self-serve portal to enterprises to manage themselves, Hosting Controller generates details SPLA reports in a format that is acceptable to Microsoft and its partners.

These are summary .csv files that can be attached with monthly invoice payments. Along with summary files, Hosting Controller also generates detailed information which the Service Provider can use to have better visibility into their cost structure and attach each item of this cost to its corresponding revenue. This allows the Service Provider to quickly purge dead accounts; accounts that are not paying but exist in the system and cost money in licensing.

The screenshot shows a web interface for 'Enterprise Reporting' on 'My Server'. It features a navigation bar with tabs for 'Exchange Server', 'BlackBerry Server', 'SharePoint Server', 'Dynamics CRM Server', and 'OCS Server'. The 'Exchange Server' tab is active, displaying a table titled 'Statistics of "NewHcxchange"'. The table lists various server metrics and their counts. At the bottom right of the table, there are three buttons: 'Show Details', 'Download XML', and 'Download CSV'.

Statistics of "NewHcxchange"	
Total Mailboxes :	14
OWA Enabled :	14
POP Enabled :	14
IMAP Enabled :	14
MAPI Enabled :	14
Active Sync Enabled :	13

Products Covered:

Hosting Controller offers *MS Exchange, MS Share Point, MS Dynamics CRM, MS Active Sync, MS SQL Server, MS Windows* and other products in its SPLA reporting, licensing of other products like *SQL Server, Windows Servers* and so on.

Audit Requirements

SPLA program eligibility requirements mention “Agree to participate in Microsoft SPLA audits” as a condition. Service Providers need to be ready to give reports in enough detail for a quick audit from Microsoft as and when required.

The monthly SPLA reports submitted to the Reseller only have summary totals of all licenses used. But for audit purposes, it is needed that the details are kept in-house relating to those totals. e.g. while it may be enough to submit total number of mailboxes used in previous month, for audit purposes, it is required to have all details of that total.

Sample Reports Available in Hosting Controller

• Exchange Mailbox Reports

- Mailbox Information / Statistics Reports
- Mailbox Reports based on All /Selected Mailbox Servers
- Mailbox Reports based on All/Selected Mailbox Databases
- Mailbox Reports based on All/Selected Mail Domain
- Mailbox Reports in TXT, CSV, and HTML Formats

My Server :: Enterprise Reporting ⊕ ?

Exchange Server | BlackBerry Server | SharePoint Server | Dynamics CRM Server | OCS Server

Filter

Select Server: -- All --

Search By: -- All --

Statistics of "Newhcxchange"

Display Name (Email Address)	OWA	POP	IMAP	MAPI	Active Sync
9dec2011 (9dec2011@9dec2010.com)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
blowmenowhard (blowmenowhard@demodemodemo.hostingcontrollerdemo.com)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
chrislarson (chrislarson@comcity.com)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
chrislarson (chrislarson@comcity.net)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
deneme (deneme@hostoky.net)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
James (James@aaa.com)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
mats.engholm (mats.engholm@testurl99.se)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
raymondleons (raymondleons@raymondleon.net)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
raymondleons (raymondleons@blog.teste.tld)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
service02 (service02@testtt.cx)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
testcx (testcx@testtt.cx)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
teste (teste@teste.tld)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
vtchtest (vtchtest@vtch.hostingcontrollerdemo.com)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
webhoster (webhoster@hostingcontrollerdemo.com)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Hosting Controller provides three types of reports such as:

Enterprise Reports

The Enterprise Reports (can be downloaded in xml and csv formats) shows total count of the followings:

- Mailboxes, OWA/POP/MAPI/IMAP/ActiveSync status
- Detail of individual mailbox [user can switch to summary/details]
- Email Address against its status of each protocol [OWA/POP/MAPI/IMAP/ActiveSync]

Exchange Reports

The Exchange Reports allows you to get the followings:

- Get all mailboxes information of an Exchange Server [text/html/csv formats]. There are 20-25 properties, few of them are listed below:
 - Alias
 - Display Name
 - Email Address Policy Enabled
 - Forwarding Address
 - When Created
- Get individual mailbox information on an Exchange Server. There are 14/15 properties that you can select to be viewed in the report, few of them are listed below:
 - Associated Item Count
 - Database
 - Deleted Item Count
 - Last Logged On User Account
 - Storage Limit Status
 - Total Item Size

Exchange Custom Reports

The Exchange Custom Reports allows you to write PowerShell command and the result information is displayed in HC [user can download in xml].

Conclusion

All Service Providers using SPLA need to have a reporting mechanism in place. Automatic Provisioning Tools or Control Panels are the best place to provide this because they already have access to all provisioned applications and accounts. SPLA reporting requirements keep changing and an account with a control panel ensures that the Service Provider always has access to the latest SPLA reporting requirements.

Hosting Controller is one such control panel that specializes in enabling hosts to be able to offer MS Exchange and its related suite of products in a multi-tenant cloud based hosting environment.

About Hosting Controller:

Founded in 1999, Hosting Controller is a complete hosting automation solution for web hosts and cloud based service providers. It allows them to manage both Windows & Linux servers simultaneously as part of a single cluster. In addition to shared hosts, HC offers a full solution suite for hosted Enterprise Applications creating a shared multi-tenant environment for automatic provisioning of Exchange 2007/2010, BlackBerry, SharePoint, OCS and Dynamics CRM. It also offers a full automation solution for Infrastructure and Virtualization providers offering virtualized partitions on both Windows and Linux based servers through Hyper-V technology for Windows & Xen Hypervisor technology for Linux!

Hosting Controller Inc. is based in Richmond, BC, Canada and has more than 3,000 customers in 125 countries worldwide.

See more details on <http://HostingController.com>

