FTP vs MFT

Why it's time to make the change

You know the risks of relying on File Transfer Protocol (FTP) for file-based data movement; lack of security, reliability and visibility, not to mention the costs to manage and maintain it. But if you think migrating to MFT is more than your organisation can take on, think again.

IBM Sterling Managed File Transfer (MFT) solutions deliver the rock solid security you need and the flexibility to upgrade, replace, consolidate or outsource your FTP processes to remediate risks at every level. The end result is not just the assurance that your critical data is protected, but faster onboarding of partners, quicker time to market and enhanced customer experience.

Making the case for MFT

With increasing reliance on the cloud and mobile devices, maintaining security for file-based data movement is a tremendous, growing concern for companies. But, security breaches and lost or compromised customer data are still on the rise, largely because of the use of FTP; a system that, at its core, hasn't changed in nearly 40 years. There are a multitude of reasons to move from FTP to MFT, but these are the five key considerations:

FTP **vs** MFT

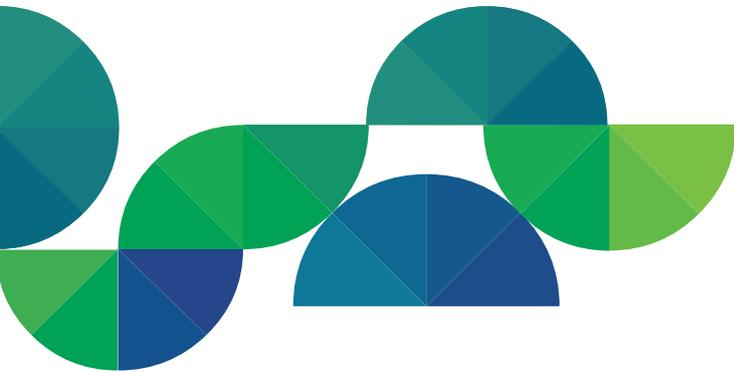| FTP		MFT
Maintaining and managing your 'free' FTP licence is a significant investment, with a budget amount that is a moving target. Managing multiple, disparate servers creates a tremendous drain on IT staff that could be focusing on more beneficial activities. Factor in the cost of retransmitting failed file transfers, not to mention the financial impact of security breaches and FTP becomes a very expensive proposition.	**Cost**	IBM Sterling MFT solutions consolidate servers to preserve valuable capital and time. IT staff time is maximised since less time is spent troubleshooting failed file transfers and on-boarding customers. And, licenses, services and maintenance costs are known quantities, which means you can budget for them.
FTP quite simply lacks the capacity to easily recover from a network or server failure. Once discovered, outages must be handled manually and usually result in restarting transfers from the beginning. Restarts can mean lost or duplicated data and disruptions to critical business processes, which leads to increased costs and customer frustration.	**Reliability**	With IBM's built-in checkpoint/restart tools, files are checkpointed at regular intervals during file transmission. In the event of a system disruption or failure, there's no need to go back to the beginning of the transfer, which means system errors won't slow you down. In fact, most IBM MFT solutions will automatically initiate a file transfer restart from the point of disruption.
FTP offers no central monitoring or visibility into file transfer activity, so the only way to monitor transfers is to look at the job logs. If you are managing multiple servers and a high volume of transfers, this becomes more than just inefficient or inconvenient.	**Visibility**	From integrated monitoring of all file transfer activity to service level agreement (SLA) reporting to real time alerts regarding file transfer events, IBM Sterling MFT gives you the mission critical around-the-clock visibility you need.
FTP does not have a security platform because it was never intended to be used the way it is in today's business environment. Password and ID information is transmitted in clear text and there are no identity authentication capabilities. FTP also fails security audits, which puts your organisation out of compliance and in danger of major liability.	**Security**	First and foremost, IBM's MFT solutions deliver security. User information is encrypted and multi-factor authentication ensures secure access. Demilitarised zone (DMZ) security, data encryption during file transfer and logs of security issues enable you to pass security audits and keep your promise to your customers.
With no ability to control data movement volume or prioritise file transfer operations, FTP is essentially at the whim of whatever customer happens to be in line first, which may not align with the priority of your business processes.	**Management**	Bring order to your file transfer activities with established queues, scheduling and session classes. IBM puts you in the driver's seat, letting you define, prioritise and control which file transfers happen and when. And that means you can more effectively connect and collaborate with your partners.

Making the move in how you move data

Far from being just another 'rip and replace' option, the IBM Sterling MFT suite addresses these five critical considerations with flexible tools that meet the needs of virtually any enterprise.

- **IBM Sterling Connect:Direct** wraps around FTP scripting so customers can use existing base script commands while they realise all the security, visibility and reliability that Connect:Direct has to offer.

- **IBM Sterling File Gateway** provides a single, secure, cost-effective edge based solution that scales with the growth of your trading partner community and offers opportunities to consolidate disparate centres of file transfer activity.

- **IBM Sterling Secure Proxy** protects your file transfers from the public internet with a DMZ-based application proxy that enforces tight controls before any transfer activity can occur.

Try the **FTP Risk Advisor Tool** to determine the optimal solution for you so that together we can create a plan that remediates FTP risk and protects your company, your customers and your brand.

Unilever in North America

With 400 brands spanning 4 category areas – personal care; ice cream and beverages; savoury, dressings and spreads; and home care – Unilever has become one of the world's most successful consumer goods companies. When the number, type and size of file transfers began to grow at Unilever in North America, the company began looking for a single solution that would reduce operational costs, reach higher levels of file transfer reliability and ensure data security.

Unilever implemented Sterling MFT to help assure security-rich data delivery. The company moves approximately 50,000 files each day now and it knows the solution can handle any size file, any format and any protocol. Sterling MFT makes it easier for Unilever's trading partners to use their preferred communication capabilities. The solution also facilitates timely resolution of transfer problems, enabling Unilever to meet all SLAs. The IBM solution has become a mission-critical application at Unilever. Virtually all documents, including sales orders, advanced shipment notices, invoices and purchase orders are safely routed and delivered in a security-rich manner. With no downtime and exceptional support, by adopting Sterling MFT, Unilever is able to help optimise and transform their dynamic business network.