Archiver: 4 Key Features to Try in Your Trial

GFI Software™

Introduction

GFI Archiver is an excellent solution for organizations that have accumulated a large volume of email, and need an easy and effective way of establishing message retention policies, eliminating duplicate messages, and enabling search and eDiscovery capabilities. While it is only natural to focus on these types of tasks during your GFI Archiver evaluation, there are four other features that are definitely worth taking a look at.

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1. The Import Tool

One of the biggest obstacles to email archiving has long been the fact that messages can exist outside of the mail server. For example, Microsoft Outlook users often move messages from their mailbox into a PST file. While it is true that some organizations go to great lengths to prevent the use of PST files, PST files may already exist from before such policies were put into place.

GFI Archiver includes an Import Export Tool that has been specifically designed to help organizations ingest PST file contents into message archives. You can access this tool from the Windows Start menu by clicking on Programs | GFI Archiver | GFI Archiver Import Export Tool.

Unlike some of the competing solutions that exist for dealing with PST files, the Import Export Tool is easy to use. Once the tool has been launched, you need only to click Import from .PST File, and then click Add PST File. Next, locate the PST file that you want to import, and then select the PST file folders whose contents you wish to bring into the archives. You can see what this looks like in the figure below.
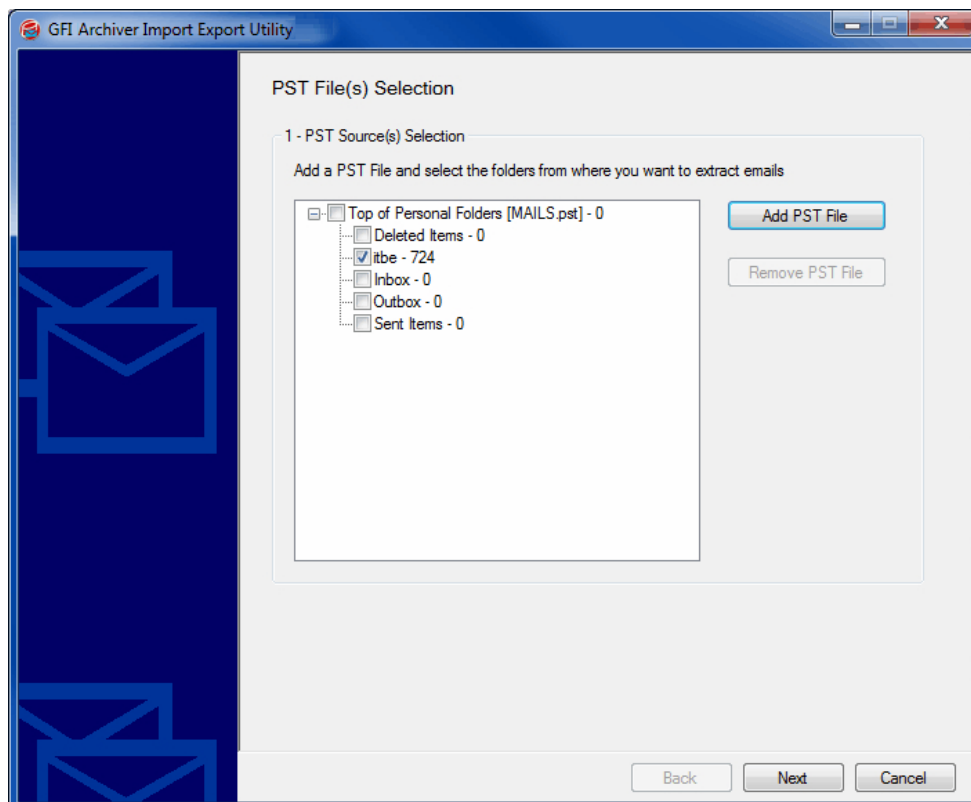
Choose the folder whose contents you wish to import.

Most organizations that perform email archiving are required to retain messages for a specific length of time. For example, an organization might have a policy that requires messages to be kept for five years. In most cases, there is no benefit to importing PST file items that are already older than the required retention period. As such, the Import and Export Tool includes an easy to use option that allows you to specify a date range for imported items. You can see what this looks like below.
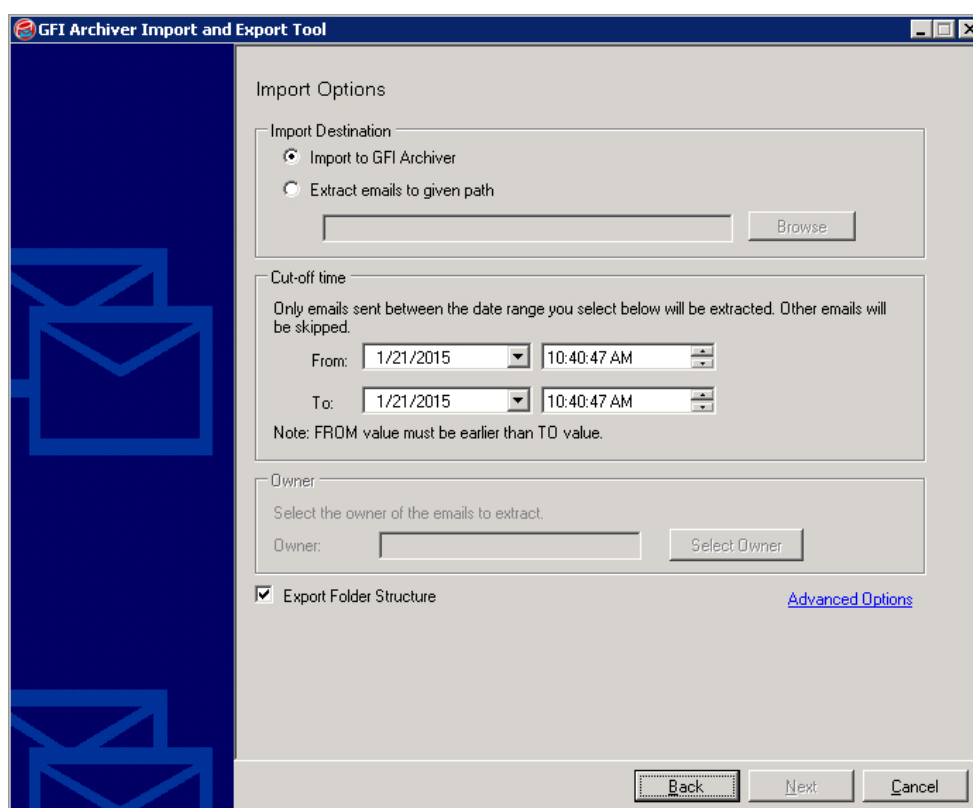
You can easily limit your import to a include only those items that fall within a certain time period.

2. Archive Store

GFI Archiver allows you to exercise a great deal of control over the archive store, through a simple point and click interface. One of the ways that you can custom tailor the store to meet your organization's own unique needs is by configuring archive restrictions. Restrictions allow you to set up inclusion and exclusion lists as a way of controlling what gets archived. For instance, you might choose to prevent archiving of messages from certain external senders. Similarly, you might choose to always archive messages for certain recipients.

Another useful option is that you can configure the store to maintain the Exchange mailbox folder structure. This allows the archives to mimic the same folder structure that is found in user's mailboxes. It can help to make searching for messages easier.

Even a small organization can produce a massive volume of email messages. This can cause an archive database to grow to the point that it becomes difficult to manage. To prevent this issue, GFI Archiver automatically creates new archive databases on a scheduled basis. This helps with keeping the databases at a manageable size.

It is worth noting that because the database creation process is scheduled, it occurs at a specific time interval (such as every six months), rather than simply creating a new database once the current database grows to a particular size. While this distinction might sound trivial, it has an important implication for real world usage. Because databases are created based on periods of time, it can make searches quicker and easier. If you are searching for an item that was created a few months ago for example, then Archiver doesn't have to search a database that was created last year.

One of the archive store's more unique features is its support for retroactive retention. This feature allows you to apply retention policies to messages that have already been archived. This feature can be especially handy if you have recently imported a large volume of messages and want to apply a retention policy to those messages.

Normally, messages are removed from the archive once their retention period expires. However, GFI Archiver allows you to apply a legal hold, which causes messages to be retained until further notice.

When a legal hold is in effect, messages will continue to be marked for deletion according to your retention policy, but will only be deleted when the legal hold is removed.

3. Advanced Searches

One of the most important features for any message archiving solution is its search interface. After all, archiving messages is really only half of the job. You need to be able to locate messages within the archives whenever necessary.

GFI Archiver offers three different search options. First, there is the Quick Search. Quick Search lets you perform a keyword search across the entire archive store. You can even include wildcard characters in your search in an effort to make it easier to find the messages that you are looking for.

The second search option is called Simple Search. Simple Search is a lot like Quick Search, except that you can filter the search results based on criteria such as sender, receiver, subject, or date.

The third search option is called Advanced Search. Advanced searches can be performed from inside of Outlook (after you install the necessary plugin), and you can include message attachments within your search. If you are searching for a specific keyword for example, the results will include both messages and message attachments that contain that keyword.

4. Access Control + Roles and Permissions

As you evaluate GFI Archiver, you should also take the time to examine its support for roles andpermissions. GFI Archiver includes a collection of built-in roles. You can assign these roles to users, and Archiver will grant the users the necessary permissions to perform their designated roles. The built-in roles include Administrator, Auditor, Full Access and Administrator, Full Access, and User. These roles can be modified as needed, and it is also easy to create your own custom roles.

You can access the various roles and permissions by opening the GFI Archiver console and going to the Configuration section, and then clicking on Roles and Permissions.