

# Clinical Laboratories of Hawaii says mahalo to Google Apps security for keeping data safe and secure




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## BUSINESS

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**Company:** Clinical Laboratories of Hawaii, LLP

**Location:** Honolulu, Hawaii

**Industry:** Healthcare

**Users:** 300

**Challenges:** With an eye toward protecting patient data from exposure and the company from litigation or contract disputes, Clinical Laboratories of Hawaii looked to implement a solution that would enable it to kill three electronic communications birds with one stone: spam protection, archiving, and encryption.

**Results:** Since implementing Google Message Discovery in early 2007, Clinical Laboratories of Hawaii has been able to reduce overall IT costs, improve productivity of its IT staff, and maintain regulatory compliance in an uninterrupted manner.

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**“By implementing an on-demand service, we were able to alleviate work from IT staff and data centers. There was no desktop to desktop installation and maintenance.”**

**Francis Chan**  
Chief Information Officer

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## Challenge

For many people, having medical tests can be stressful enough – without having to think about the results remaining confidential. Most patients assume that the medical laboratory testing company takes steps to ensure the privacy of the actual anatomical and clinical tests – the blood collection tubes, microscope slides, and swabs. But what about the electronic communications between the laboratory testing company and the hospitals and doctors ordering the tests? Or between the laboratory and its partners?

That’s exactly what the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) addresses, and every healthcare company in the United States – including Clinical Laboratories of Hawaii, the state’s leading diagnostic laboratory provider – must comply with its stringent regulations that govern the security of protected health information. Encrypting all email that contained patient data was an obvious first step, but Clinical Labs’ forward-thinking legal counsel dictated that the company should also archive all such email to ensure compliance with HIPAA regulations. Recalls Francis Chan, CIO of Clinical Laboratories of Hawaii, “Our executives and legal counsel wanted to address compliance and litigation requirements proactively in one fell swoop.”

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## Solution

With an eye to finding an encryption and archiving solution, Chan also realized that this was an opportunity to reduce the volume of spam hitting the company. “Existing internal data centers were overloaded and IT staff was dealing with many administrative burdens,” says Chan. “One of the most time-consuming situations was when a user’s computer crashed and lost all the email stored on his or her local disk drive. We couldn’t recreate what was lost, because we didn’t have an archive.”

As with every technology evaluation the company conducts, Clinical Labs did not specifically set out to implement an on-demand electronic communications and compliance solution. Says Chan, “We are not partial to any solution; we look at a number of options and decide on what works best for us.” After looking at in-house versus hosted services, the company determined that “Google Message Discovery, powered by Postini, was the best fit for our situation, from both a functionality as well as a cost-effectiveness standpoint.”

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## ABOUT GOOGLE APPS SECURITY AND COMPLIANCE

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Google Apps security and compliance products, powered by Postini, are available to businesses and organizations who want to make their existing email infrastructures more secure, compliant, and productive. The message security products protect you from spam and messaging threats. The compliance products enable you to enforce message policy and content management, archive messages with discovery services, as well as secure your web browsing and encrypt your sensitive email. As a service, there is nothing to install or maintain, so you can start small and implement additional services as your requirements grow.

For more information, visit [www.google.com/a/security](http://www.google.com/a/security)

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## Benefits

According to Chan, one of the immediate benefits Clinical Labs experienced with Google is that updating the software for all 300 of the company's users is automatic. "Before we had Google Message Discovery, we didn't have a centralized update process in terms of patches and spam filters," recalls Chan. "Users were not diligently updating their desktop systems, and we were very exposed to viruses and regulatory noncompliance. With Google, everything is automatically updated across the system and we are always protected."

In addition to the automatic updates, Chan is a fan of the ease of expanding the number of users licensed to use Google Message Discovery across his business. "Google Message Discovery gives us the flexibility to expand as our business grows and they don't nickel and dime us," says Chan. "Rather than locking us out when we need to add users, Google Message Discovery automatically allows us to add the users and then bills us the incremental changes at the end of every month. The configurations changes occur seamlessly and we are never surprised by unpredictable costs because Google handles the accounting part of user management for us."

## Results

Because Google Message Discovery requires no internal hardware, software, installation, or maintenance, Clinical Labs has been able to reduce IT costs and free up staff to focus on core business tasks. Says Chan, "By implementing an on-demand service, we were able to alleviate work from IT staff and data centers. There was no desktop to desktop installation and maintenance. And archiving messages was as easy as turning on journaling."

Clinical Labs also realized the advantages of an on-demand solution the hard way. Very soon after Clinical Labs implemented Google Message Discovery, a 6.7 magnitude earthquake hit the islands and cut power to the company. To conserve emergency power to the facility that houses the laboratory as well as the company's servers, selected servers were shut down, including the email servers. Because Google automatically spools mail when its clients servers are offline, Clinical Labs was constantly protected and lost no business-critical communications during the power outage. Comments Chan, "Even during natural disaster, Google's on-demand solution ensured that our communications remained safe and secure and we were able to maintain regulatory compliance."

"As a healthcare company, regulatory compliance is not an option; it's a requirement. And Google Message Discovery helps us maintain that compliance and makes our lives so much easier," continues Chan.

Chan sums up his experience with Google as "Boring. It just works all the time. I wish more of our software was as boring as Google Message Discovery. It just hums along in the background and it's great software."

