



OPEN-XCHANGE

**Receiving emails
with OXEE**

OPEN-XCHANGE: Receiving emails with OXEE

Published 17th January

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Licence keys, Licensing Process, Integration with maintenance portal

1. What solution to choose: fetchmail or MX record

This document describes different ways to receive emails in Open-Xchange Express Edition (OXEE). This document also provides some reasons that help decide which option should be taken. There are two basic ideas: One option is to directly receive emails, the other option is to fetch emails from a mailbox hosted elsewhere.

The first option refers to the so-called MX record. This MX record has usually to be configured at the provider end that hostes your domain name, and maybe provides other services (website hosting, VoIP, mailboxes, ..). The MX record is required to route all emails sent to your domain to your email server.

The second option refers to the so-called fetchmail functionality (this functionality is already built into the OXEE server). As the name suggests it fetches emails from mailboxes that are hosted elsewhere. Both methods are widely used and there are good reasons why both exist. The following paragraphs help decide what method is appropriate for your business.

Domain name. The first question is do you own a domain name. If you have a domain name then you are free to decide which method to use: To receive emails directly (the MX record of your domain points to your OXEE server) or to let the MX record point to an email provider who stores all your email in their mailboxes. You would then use fetchmail to pick up your emails from there. If you do not own a domain name then you do not have a choice and you have to choose fetchmail. This is because a domain name is required to route emails to your email server.

Availability. Do you have a server and network infrastructure that guarantees that your server can receive emails 24/7? If not then it is almost cretin that emails will be lost. If your mail server is not available 24/7 you may want you emails sent to an email provider and then fetch your emails when your server is online. Workarounds are sometimes offered by providers who can buffer emails as long as you email server is unavailable.

Static server IP. The MX record points to your mail server, that means it points to the IP address of your mail server. If that changes, then the MX record has to be changed too. This means that the MX record solution can only be recommended when your OXEE server has a static IP address. Workarounds include dynamic address mapping: As soon as a new IP address is assigned to your server the provider is notified of the change. They then immediately change the MX record to point to the new IP address. The time between change of IP address and change of MX record might be short, but emails sent to you in that time might get lost (see availability section for a workaround).

Backup. Technology can break. This applies to both software and hardware and there is nothing as bad as losing important emails or documents. If you do not wish to put in the infrastructure to make regular backups, you might prefer to choose fetchmail and leave all emails in a remote mailbox. That way you can simple re-fetch all emails after a bad crash.

Complexity. Choosing fetchmail means that there are three players in the game: The sender of an email; the provider who receives and stores the email and the local server that fetches the email from the provider. In contrast, if emails are sent directly to the local server the complexity of the system is significantly reduced. With reduces complexity comes a reduction in number of points of failure (Note: The provider could go offline too). Fur-

thermore, each user on the provider has to be configured as well as each user on the fetchmail system.

The summary of all this is: If you do not own a domain name then you have no choice and you will have to choose fetchmail. If your server is not available 24/7 or if your server has no static IP or if you do not want to care about backups of your email then fetchmail is the recommended way to receive emails. If you own a domain name and can take care of availability and backup and you have a static IP then the MX record solution seems to be the best fit for your requirements as it reduces complexity, points of failure, costs and effort for user management.

For more information how to set up a mail server using an MX record or fetchmail, please refer to the How to guides or the OXEE manual.