

IT SECURITY GURU PRODUCT REVIEW

AppRiver CipherPost Pro

Supplier: AppRiver

Product: AppRiver cipherpost pro

Website: www.appriver.com

Price: £6.80 per user ex VAT

Scores



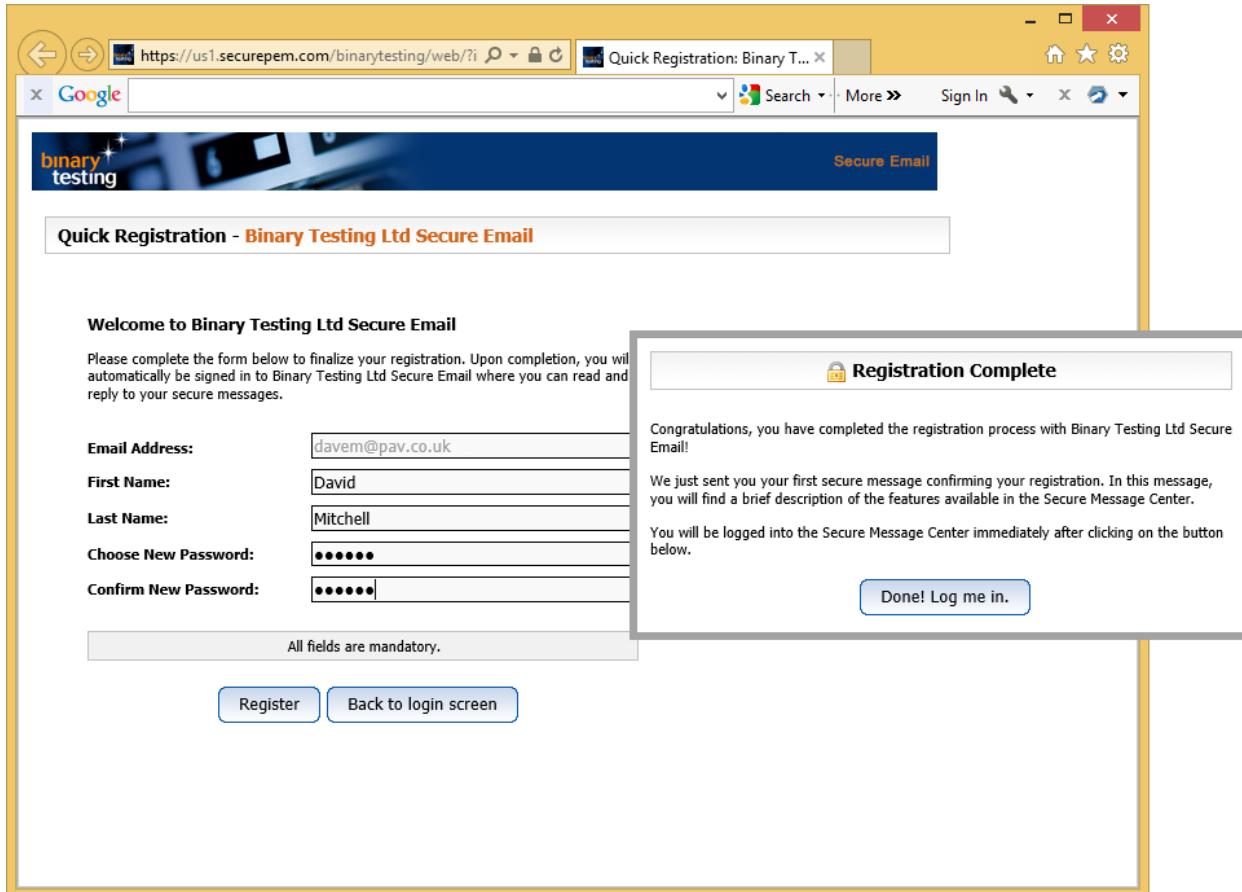
Verdict: CipherPost Pro is an affordable and highly secure email encryption service that's simple to deploy and offers extensive message tracking and auditing.

Businesses handling confidential information have legal and moral obligations to ensure it stays that way and especially so when emailing it. Email encryption is the obvious answer and AppRiver's CipherPost Pro offers a simple and affordable cloud service that neatly avoids the problems inherent in many other solutions.

CipherPost Pro uses AppRiver's Secure Messaging Platform (SMP) to provide complete end-to-end security. When a user sends an email with CipherPost Pro, it avoids using insecure SMTP and establishes an HTTPS connection to the AppRiver cloud data centre.

The email is sent securely to the cloud servers where it is stored with 256-bit AES encryption. SMTP is only used to send a notification email to the recipient which doesn't contain any confidential data or file attachments.

CipherPost Pro snaps in with existing email systems and requires few changes to working practises. AppRiver offers its own webmail portal, an Outlook plug-in, a Google Chrome extension that works with Microsoft's OWA and other webmail services, a desktop agent plus apps for iOS, Android, Windows Phone and Blackberry.



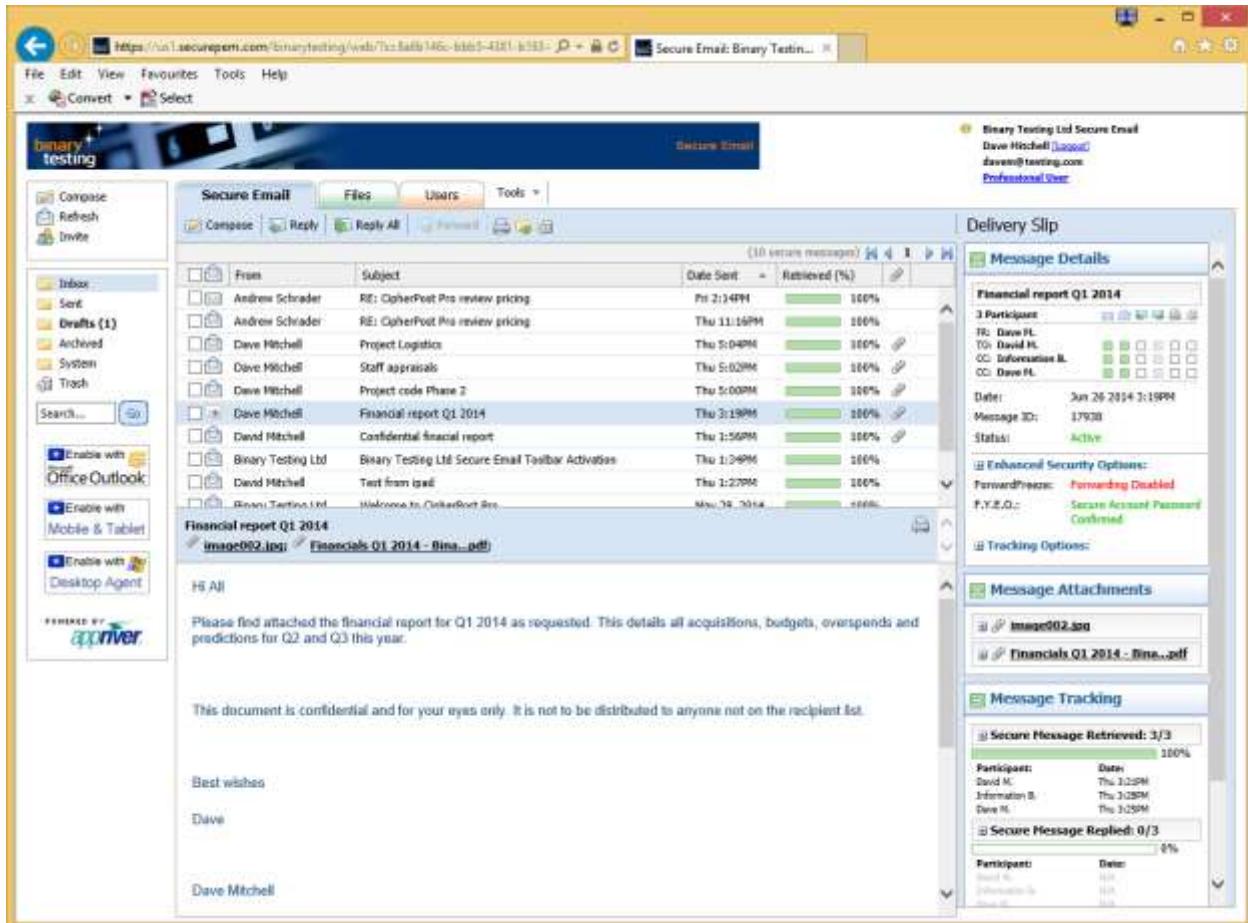
Picture 1: New users are invited with their first secure email and the registration process is very simple.

User enrollment

For testing, AppRiver created a new account for us and sent us our first secure email. This contained a link to the webmail portal where we registered our email address, provided a password of our choice and used the download link to install the Outlook plug-in.

To enrol other users you simply send them an encrypted email. CipherPost Pro sends two slightly different messages to help avoid spam filters but both contain the same link for the registration portal.

When users first enrol they are placed in the Guest group which allows them to communicate only with the user that invited them. Professional users can send emails to any recipient and invite new users.



Picture 2: The webmail portal can be branded and provides download links for the Outlook plug-in and desktop agent

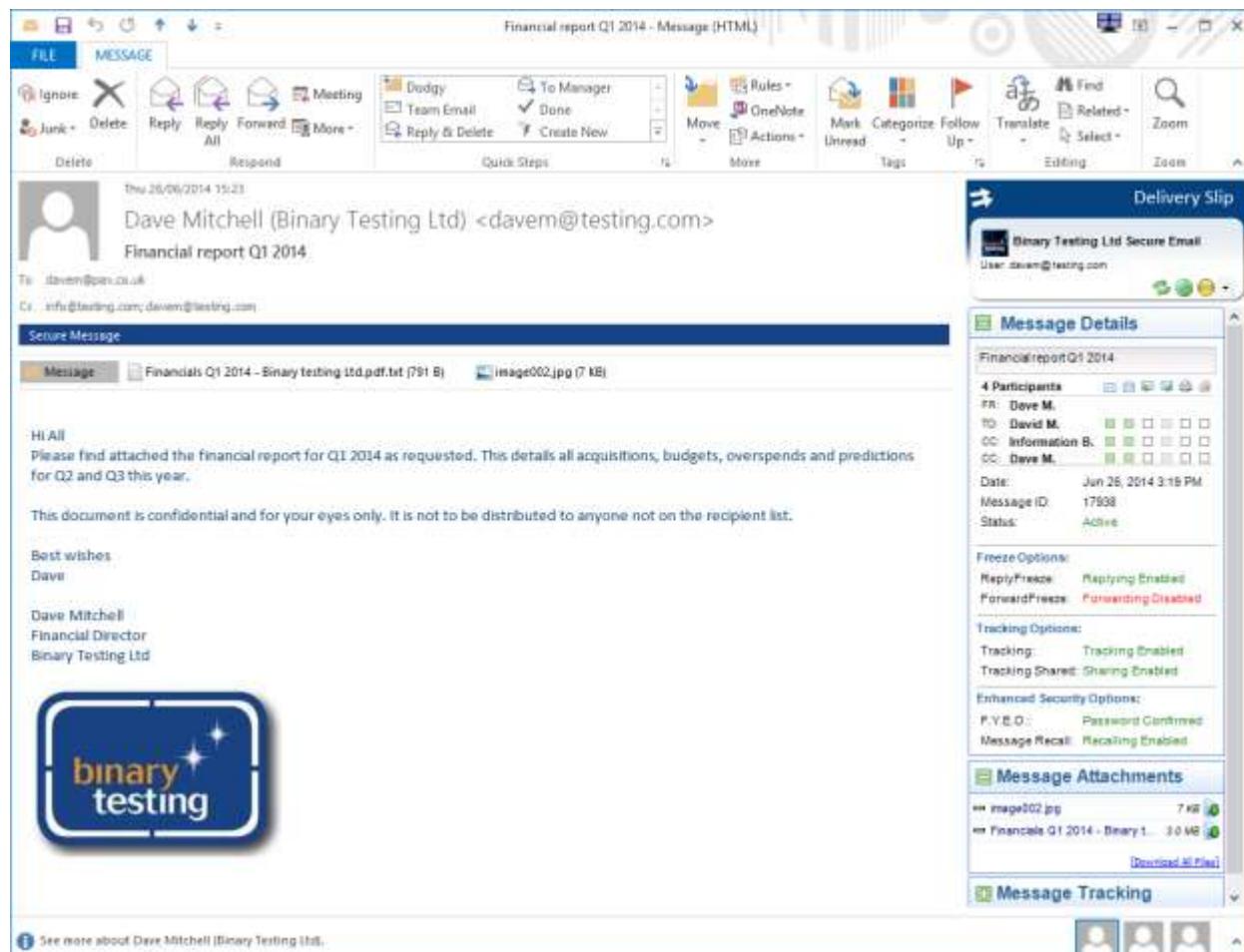
For your eyes only

CipherPost Pro provides extensive email tracking and control features. Tracking displays a grid in the email delivery slip for every recipient showing whether they've opened it and retrieved the email.

The Freeze option can be used to control reply and forward actions. We tried to forward a secure email that had ForwardFreeze enabled and the Outlook plug-in advised us this was not permitted.

Security can be tightened further with the For Your Eyes Only (FYEO) options. You can request that recipients enter their account password before being allowed to open the email or you can apply a custom password.

The webmail portal works well but only has minimal facilities for formatting new messages. We also successfully used the CipherPost Pro app for iOS on our iPad where the same delivery slip message facilities are provided.



Picture 3: The Outlook plug-in displays decrypted messages and its delivery slip provides valuable tracking data.

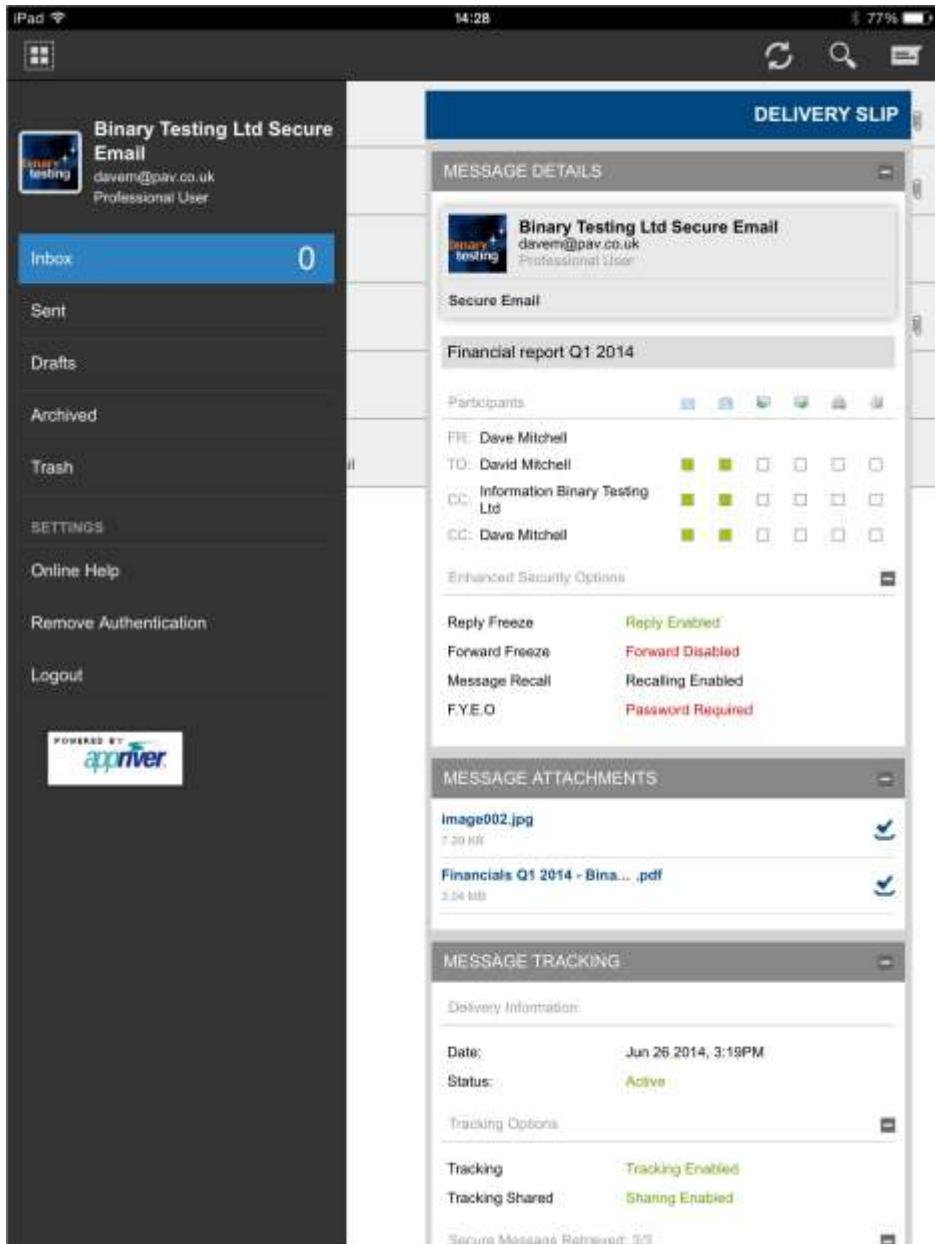
The customer management portal

Professional users can access the customer management dashboard for their accounts. The console is very basic and lacks any documentation although AppRiver is developing a new portal with more features and online help.

Even so, it does provide plenty of information about users and their activities. You can see when an account was created, its group membership, who invited them and when they first registered.

It shows the number of secure emails each user has sent and received plus the amount of cloud storage their file attachments are using. Other information includes the date and time a user last logged in, when they activated the Outlook toolbar and what version they're running.

Selecting a user loads a customer management window which shows their details and current group membership. From here, you can promote a Guest to Professional status or demote a user to Guest status.



Picture 4: There's an app for that – CipherPost Pro worked fine with our iPad running iOS 7.1.

Phenomenal Care

For customer support, AppRiver offers what it grandly calls its 'Phenomenal Care' service. We had occasion to test this as on one of our Outlook clients we had accidentally registered its plug-in with the wrong CipherPost Pro account and couldn't see how to change this.

We sent a standard support request to AppRiver and received a response back in less than thirty minutes. We just needed to select the Secure Account tab from the plug-in options, block and delete the current account and re-register it with the correct one using the Outlook icon in the portal.

Conclusion

CipherPost Pro is very affordable and its pricing structure allows it to scale across a wide range of usage scenarios. AppRiver charges a one-time setup fee of £15 plus a monthly subscription fee of £6.80 per user with a minimum monthly charge of £15.

During testing we were impressed with CipherPost Pro and found it easy to use and offering extensive message tracking and control features. Businesses than must secure their communications will find email encryption doesn't get much easier than this.