

## Spam cull keeps m8 telecom on the line

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By **David Braue**

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Being inundated with spam e-mail is annoying enough, but it can be downright problematic when it's affecting productivity and diverting staff attention that should be directed at customer care. For virtual mobile operator m8 telecom, the problem became so bad recently that it realised a revisitation of its existing mail protection infrastructure was in order.

The two-year-old company, which provides a range of mobile phone services to around 100,000 customers through a chain of some 180 dealers nationwide, had been using antivirus and antispam products since its inception.

With increasingly sophisticated spam and phishing attacks becoming the norm and volumes increasing steadily, the company's IT staff realised they spent far too much time fixing the systems of its 48 users. Analysis of the company's existing mail security solution — the combination of Microsoft Exchange's built-in anti-spam filter and GFI MailEssentials — showed that despite the use of those applications, 48 percent of m8's incoming e-mail was bad mail, including 13 percent that was spam.

"Spam just gets worse as everyone sending it gets smarter," says IT manag-

er Armin Ghazarian. "It was slipping through our filters, and it was just getting to everybody."

The solution, as Ghazarian found after surveying a market inundated with anti-spam options, lay in a dual-pronged attack that saw the company decommission the MailEssentials server and replace it with Trend Micro's Client Server Messaging Security for SMB application, which runs on desktops and servers, and uses a variety of techniques to increase detection of zero-day spam.

Improvement in detection rates reaped immediate benefits for the company. "Basically, after the first week, everyone was saying that the spam's gone," says Ghazarian. "It has been saving me time because I don't have to clean up after someone has been phished, or after they downloaded a virus when an e-mail came through."

He wasn't done yet, however: recognising the higher detection rate provided by the Trend Micro technology, Ghazarian sought an additional improvement in its anti-spam defences by introducing Trend Micro's Email Security Services (ESS), a hosted antispam solution that would keep spam away from the company's network.

For m8 telecom, choosing a hosted anti-spam solution made sense compared with alternative, more expensive appliance-based solutions that relied on adding yet another piece of equipment to the company network.

Configuring the hosted solution proved to be relatively simple: m8 telecom instructed its ISP to redirect incoming mail to the ESS servers, with cleared mail going to the company's Exchange server. Blocked spam is redirected to a separate account for review and, after two days, disposal. Real-time spam blocking statistics are available through a secure Web-based portal, allowing Ghazarian to track ESS performance over time.

So far, however, the lack of even one false positive has made the new environment a hands-off endeavour for Ghazarian, with the near total elimination of spam boosting productivity throughout the company. "It's saving us all time, and doesn't tie up our servers as much," he says. "The whole thing has been very easy to do."

*Trend Micro Email Security Services are now incorporated within InterScan Messaging Hosted Security.*



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