



Internet Solutions Marshal8e6 Stops Viruses, Spam for 100,000 Internet Solutions Users

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General Manager for Security Division, IS

Information Technology (IT) companies supplying infrastructure and services for businesses operating in the e-Business arena are faced with many new challenges. The emergence of email - despite its undisputed value - has major implications for business security, such as transmission of confidential data, increased exposure to legal liability, infection by viruses, and reduced productivity due to employee email abuse. With this backdrop and the burgeoning problems of spam, Internet Solutions (IS), based in South Africa, opted for an ASP content filtering solution that incorporates MailMarshal software.

Background

Internet Solutions is the leading supplier of infrastructure/services for the secure conducting of e-Business in South Africa. The company has established partnerships with local and international best-of-breed vendors and hosts the largest online community in South Africa. “Our primary goal with developing this solution was to stop customers receiving unwanted email. Thus, the challenge was to develop an outsourced content inspection solution, which would simultaneously control work-related email and save bandwidth by blocking traffic prior to it traveling down our customers’ leased lines,” informs Anthony Southgate, General Manager for Security Division, IS.

Key Benefits for IS and Its Clients

- Dramatically reduces spam
- Blocks viruses before they reach the customer’s leased line
- Dramatically reduces offensive material that reaches employees via email
- Assists in the enforcement of organization appropriate use policy
- Saves the IT manager time and resources
- Helps prevent unproductive email usage

Key Reasons Why IS Selected Marshal8e6

- Best-of-breed content filtering software
- Flexible business approach - ASP licence agreement
- Hands-on approach in developing the solution
- Trusted by major clients looking for content inspection
- Growing presence in South Africa

Benefits of Going the ASP Route

- Trained personnel monitor and maintain the solution
- Updates are instantaneous
- Outsourced and cost effective solution
- Increased lease line efficiency
- Economies of scale reduce costs

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After scrutinising the various content inspection products available, IS selected the MailMarshal solution. “We specifically sought a solution that would be easy to manage and update, as well as being highly flexible to seamlessly adapt to changing organizational needs or government ICT legislation, and MailMarshal satisfied all these requirements,” says Southgate. MailMarshal was instrumental in helping with the design of the initial architecture and documenting best practice for the installation. Valuable antivirus (AV) advice and suggested capacity for the servers were also valuable contributions during the first phase of development. “From a business perspective, MailMarshal formulated a profitable ASP licence agreement, without which the solution may never have grown into what it is today,” Southgate suggests.

Designed as a completely outsourced service, MailMarshal software is loaded onto servers housed in the IS Data Center. These servers are configured to receive all mail from the customer’s domains and relay the mail to the SMTP gateway. The unique rule policy from each customer is loaded onto the servers. All messages that do not comply with the policies are blocked, and notifications are sent out to the relevant party, be they the sender, the recipient and or the administrator, as is relevant, thus work related messages can be released on request.

The system allows for a number of checks to be made on the messages or attachments and filtering rules applied or changed. Email can be blocked based on size, type of attachment, or text contained in the email. In addition to the standard MailMarshal rules set, IS has adapted the ASP solution to include comprehensive reporting of use and attempted abuse, which gives customers the ability to increase policy compliance and enhance use of email as a business tool. Other email rules, such as blocking large spreadsheets, and video and image files, can easily be incorporated. Mail relay ensures that if a customer’s server is unavailable, incoming mail will be captured, stored and relayed once the server is up again. Queue monitoring, virus checking and anti-spam monitoring also form part of the solution.

Internet Solutions has been running the MailMarshal solution - branded by IS as Mail Firewall - since 2000. Today, with over 150 customers and 100,000 users around

South Africa, it is the largest MailMarshal ASP email filtering solution in the world. The solution is equally suited to large corporate organisations of in excess of 5,000 users, as it is to small-to-medium businesses of 10 or 20 users. To effectively support and manage this large user base, IS employs over 70 servers, as well as a dedicated installation team and a call centre team that supports clients around the clock. Various high-end IT resources are on-hand when they are needed.

Many of IS’ existing clients that signed-up for the new service believed that unwanted email would naturally diminish over time. The company’s statistics have shown at a best stagnation, but normally a growth in the volume of spam targeting organisations. Thus, the business value of the solution cannot be underestimated.

“In many instances upwards of 50% of a customers’ incoming SMTP traffic is blocked on a monthly basis, due to the implementation of content inspection rules. This saves bandwidth, as well as time taken to manage the email. When filtering mail at IS, outbound mail is only checked once it reaches IS, already having traversed the clients leased line. “This is normally not an issue, as clients typically have more outbound bandwidth than inbound, and if you’re stopping unwanted mail before it enters, there is less to send out.” states Southgate. “If an employee is reading and transmitting junk mail around the office, productivity and internal bandwidth are also being wasted, while the company mail server is storing useless mail.”

Not only does the system block unwanted emails, it also encourages email best practice by automatically attaching the company's disclaimer to outbound mail, which also saves bandwidth as the disclaimers are added at IS and not at the customer's premises.

Virus attacks are also blocked and quarantined before they reach the customer's email server or desktops. AV updates and patches are fast to act and offer customers a high degree of protection.

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The outsourced MailMarshal solution was designed to combat the high cost of bandwidth in South Africa and abuse of business related email. By performing content inspection prior to the mail reaching the leased line, non-work related email is filtered out and this has resulted in improved levels of employee productivity, while also saving on bandwidth for many Internet Solutions customers. "The growth of the solution alone bears testimony to its effectiveness in reducing unwanted emails and blocking viruses, while ongoing development, which will enhance management capabilities and strengthen AV functionality, will continue to see the MailMarshal solution exceed expectations," Southgate concludes.

About Marshal8e6

Marshal8e6 is a global provider of Secure Internet Gateway products for organizations of all sizes. Marshal8e6 is the only security company capable of delivering comprehensive content security across multiple delivery platforms, including software, appliances and Software-as-a-service (SaaS). The company's complete security portfolio delivers the tools necessary to manage and secure email, Web and the endpoint as well as protect against data leakage. Today, more than 16 million end users in more than 20,000 companies in 96 countries rely on Marshal8e6 solutions to protect their businesses at the email and Web gateway.



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