



Imperial College London Counteracts Spam and Unwanted Email Content With MailMarshal SMTP

Client:

Imperial College London

Web Site:

www.imperial.ac.uk

Requirements:

Email Filtering

Solutions:

MailMarshal SMTP

“We receive about 3.2 million illegitimate emails a day on average, comprising mostly of spam, but also possible phishing, DOS and DHA attacks. We found that we had a very limited ability to block phishing emails and wanted a solution that would regularly update to make sure that the network was secure from any malicious emails.”

Chris Roberts
Security Manager
Imperial College London

The College

Imperial College London is one of Britain's top universities specializing in science, engineering, medicine and business. The College is ranked third in the Times National University League Table alongside Oxford and Cambridge and was placed 6th overall in the world in the 2008 THES - QS World University Rankings of universities worldwide and 27th in the world by the Shanghai Jiao Tong Academic Ranking of World Universities.

Most activity at Imperial College London is centered on the College's main campus located in South Kensington in central London and at its six hospital campuses. There is also another campus at Silwood Park near Ascot in Berkshire. The College became independent from the University of London on 8th July 2007 on the 100th anniversary of its founding and has since continued to grow with major projects that have included the Imperial College Business School, the Ethos sports centre and Southside hall of residence.

The IT Security Team in the College's ICT Department is run by a small team of four who centrally manage the security of all 16 campus locations geographically dispersed in and around the London area, including the 3,000 students in halls of residences where students have 24 hour email and Internet access.

Unwanted Spam

The College currently receives approximately 3.5 million emails every day, of which more than 91 per cent is usually comprised of unwanted spam. The mass volume of emails meant the ICT Department wanted to have powerful and granular control of what was coming into the College's network. With the continuous growth of the College, the team also needed a highly scalable and easy-to-manage solution that would combine anti-spam, anti-virus and content security.

Chris Roberts, Security Manager for Imperial College London explains: “We receive about 3.2 million illegitimate emails a day on average, comprising mostly of spam, but also possible phishing, DOS and DHA attacks. We found that we had a very limited ability to block phishing emails and wanted a solution that would regularly update to make sure that the network was secure from any malicious emails. It was also important that we could apply policies for security and acceptable use among the College's staff and students providing a safe and efficient working and learning environment.”

The Solution

After evaluating a number of other anti-spam and email security products, the decision was made to pilot MailMarshal SMTP among a few key users for two months before deploying the solution to the rest of the College.

Key Benefits

- MailMarshal SMTP addressed the need for the ICT Department to have more powerful and granular control over all inbound and outbound emails.
- Allowed 95 per cent of users to personally manage their own quarantined spam, thus freeing up valuable time for the ICT Department to concentrate on enhancing other aspects of network security.
- MailMarshal SMTP was seamlessly and easily integrated into the College's cross-platform infrastructure, including Windows, Linux, and Unix.
- ICT team could implement ad-hoc policy changes to respond to new threats to safeguard the integrity of the university's network.
- Significantly reduced the amount of daily

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As an email gateway solution MailMarshal SMTP fully addressed the need of the ICT Department to have powerful and granular control over all incoming and outgoing emails at the College's network perimeter. MailMarshal SMTP had the ability to block incoming email threats and almost eliminate potential phishing attacks. This ability also controls the amount of spam, viruses, porn, malware entering the network, while enforcing Acceptable Use Policies providing a safe and efficient working environment for staff and students.

It also meant students and staff at the College could have immediate access to quarantined emails. Staff was concerned about false-positives and they wouldn't be able to access quarantined emails easily. However, once deployed, staff quickly realized that MailMarshal SMTP was very effective at detecting SPAM. In addition, access to retrieve quarantined emails using the SPAM Quarantine Management website was quick and efficient. The flexibility of MailMarshal SMTP also meant the ICT team could handle spam that had been sent to list addresses and automatically forward a notice to the list owner.

“We also set up a ‘holiday facility’ that would retain quarantined emails a little longer than normal whilst staff was away at conferences,” comments Roberts. This was MailMarshal's great appeal over the other solutions; its flexibility meant we could tune it to the College's environment.

“The advanced signature based approach of MailMarshal helped weed out the more threatening emails, and around 95% of users could personally manage their own quarantined spam, allowing the ICT Department to concentrate on enhancing other aspects of network security,” continues Roberts. “We used to, on average, receive half a dozen email related queries a day, but now we receive half that in a whole week.”

MailMarshal SMTP was seamlessly and easily integrated into the College's cross-platform infrastructure - including Windows, Linux, and Unix - to protect against current and future threats posed by illegitimate email.

Complete Email Protection

With MailMarshal SMTP being successfully deployed in such a demanding environment, the College was able to achieve unprecedented control and protection of unsolicited and inappropriate content for its 15,000 staff and students across all campuses and within the college's working offices.

“From integrated URLs to image spam, spammers are always going to invent new and innovative ways to by-pass email filters,” continues Roberts. “With MailMarshal SMTP, Imperial College London is now in a position where it has a comprehensive email protection solution that is responsive to future threats, while simultaneously protecting the staff and students from the abundance of unsolicited emails that are received by the College on daily basis. We understand that spam itself, whether malicious or innocuous, will not be completely eradicated for years to come; so the ability to implement ad-hoc policy changes to respond to new threats is vital in order for us to safeguard the integrity of an institution such as Imperial.”

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