



ABOUT COLLEGE OF LAW



Guildford-based College of Law is a leading supplier of legal education and training in the UK, with affiliations and endorsements from many of the country's leading legal firms. The College offers numerous courses and publications, as well as free legal advice to members of the public.

THE PROBLEM

The IT team had installed GWAVA, an anti-spam and anti-virus solution for GroupWise systems, to protect its network of 2,500 PCs. However, the solution was not performing well, and vast amounts of spam continued to inundate its computers.

"We were receiving a huge amount of spam," said Nick Galt, IT director for the College. "Our existing solution worked, but it needed a lot of management. We were looking for a more efficient solution to deal with the sheer volume with which we were being hit."

According to Nick, the levels of unwanted mail were extraordinarily high partly because many of the people behind those 2,500 computer screens were students.

Case Study College of Law

Email Security Service

"Inevitably, a lot of them use Hotmail, Yahoo! and other online email systems which are open to harvesting," Nick said. "Standard systems just didn't do the job. GWAVA proved unworkable, and we tried device-based systems, which were either equally difficult to manage or had associated difficulties that we were unwilling to live with."

THE SOLUTION

Lawyers need to view texts that use very particular words and phrases. The solution needed to be very flexible as students quite legitimately view things with profanities and other elements that most organisations will seek to block.

Working in conjunction with Altman Technologies Nick Galt settled on a managed email service that could be configured to their precise needs. Their service supports predefined and custom dictionaries of regular expressions and keywords to aid in detecting and controlling messages with sensitive or inappropriate content. Administrators can also create custom rules by combining subsets or supersets of dictionaries.

Email is hosted, which means that email is directed to the service's own servers rather than those of the college or an internet service provider. Messages are filtered there, which provides enhanced security, increased bandwidth and more customisable settings. A web-based administrative panel and summary dashboard offer total visibility, control and flexibility.



There were a number of options for implementation, but Nick wanted the system to become ubiquitous immediately. "We evaluated the service for a couple of days, but it's not the sort of thing you can have in a test environment," he said. "You really have to evaluate it in a live environment to see whether it's going to work."

He was reassured that if the new system proved to be unworkable, a call to Altman Technologies could have the mail redirection and hosting switched off within minutes. Although that knowledge provided peace of mind, the solution worked perfectly and Nick never had to make that call.

The biggest practical issue was synchronising the service with the email accounts so that valid users did not have their email blocked. Working with Nick and the development team at Webroot, Altman Technologies made a change to the service to make this work effectively within a short space of time.

"Altman Technologies worked through the problems with us," Nick added, "and made various technical tweaks to allow seamless synchronisation."

Nick Galt
IT Director, College of Law

"In the four months since the Altman Technologies Email Security Service was implemented, it has already blocked 6.5 million spam emails, and the number of legitimate emails has been just over 800,000. I am extremely happy with the solution."

THE BENEFITS & RESULTS

One of the risks of any spam filtering system is that it potentially filters a small amount of legitimate emails as well as the unwanted.

"We had some complaints about that with the old system, but since this service went live, the complaints have stopped," Nick said.

More importantly, the spam email has ceased to be an issue. "We saw an overnight drop in the volume of junk mail, and that led to an immediate freeing up of our network bandwidth," Nick says. "At the height of the problem, 95 percent of our incoming mail from the Internet was identified as spam and blocked."

Previously, these emails would have been accepted and filtered on the College's servers, requiring additional manual filtering where there were grey areas. Once the new system took over, all of this overhead was eliminated immediately. The College remains a satisfied customer with all of the benefits delivered rapidly, along with a smooth transition between the old and new system.