Case Study: City of Richmond

Traffic Control cleans up inboxes at City of Richmond

Case Study / May 2006

Proactive Email Protection

MAILCHANNELS

THE ORGANIZATION

The City of Richmond is the administrative arm that runs key departments such as engineering, waste removal, parks and recreation and cultural affairs on behalf of the people of Richmond. Richmond has been experiencing growth and change with remarkable speed, transforming from a rural, local community to an international city with a balance of urban, sub-urban family, and rural areas. The continuing development of the downtown core, and the pending construction of rapid transit and an Olympic Speed Skating Oval on time for the 2010 Winter Games, ensures that Richmond's transformation is ongoing.

THE CHALLENGE

The City's 1,500 employees were receiving an ever increasing volume of spam and nuisance email. Systems administrators were struggling to keep email systems online in the face of periodic email traffic bursts and had investigated the use of blacklists as a potential solution. However, because City staff must be publicly accessible to all City residents, the use of blacklists to lessen spam was seen as an undesirable option.

City workers subscribe to many essential subscription-based newsletters, which were often being filtered out by the City's spam filtering system. Adam Cheal, Senior Network Analyst, knew he needed to find a new way to reduce the load on the City's email servers and yet ensure the reliable delivery of legitimate emails. "We implemented heuristic-based anti-spam and anti-virus software and that got rid of a big chunk of emails, but sometimes it would delete good emails as well," explains Cheal. "Even though we cut down the flow, users still complained they received too much spam –we were caught between a rock and hard place."

THE SOLUTION

"When I heard about the unique way that Traffic Control could slow down or throttle suspicious email traffic by looking at envelope characteristics, sender reputation and protocol adherence, I knew this was an approach that might just work," said Cheal. "The day after installing Traffic Control, email volumes were reduced by half. More importantly, some end-users actually called me to thank me for reducing their spam load and it's not very often that users call with positive news."

The City of Richmond's email infrastructure takes a three-tiered approach. At the network edge, a Solaris server running Traffic Control acts as the SMTP gateway. Traffic Control passes email traffic in real-time to a second Solaris server running the Sendmail MTA and scanning email messages for spam and viruses using Sophos PureMessage 5.0 and Sybari Antigen. Finally, email is delivered to a Microsoft Exchange server for distribution to employee inboxes.

SIGNIFICANT REWARDS

Saving on CPU

Traffic Control reduces the overall amount of email that resource intensive applications like PureMessage and Antigen have to process using their sophisticated spam and virus scanning algorithms. "Traffic Control at the gateway saves our downstream infrastructure from working so hard."

Save on Storage

Many email power users at the City of Richmond use their email as a document management system. Managing the ever increasing amounts of storage required to archive email has become a sore point for Cheal. By dramatically reducing email volume, Traffic Control frees up space for power users' important documents while reducing Adam's need to continually acquire more storage.

Improved Quality of Service

Because less junk email traffic makes it past the gateway, City of Richmond employees spend less time searching through their junk folders to identify important business-related email messages such as newsletters.

Eash of Use and Maintenance

"Traffic Control took about an hour to install –and MailChannels sales engineer was there with me on the phone to make sure it all went smoothly," said Adam Cheal . "Since the install there has been very little for me to maintain and the system has been very reliable."

The Future

"While we are looking at other online communications technologies such as secure chat, email will remain the primary channel used by the public to communicate with our employees," said Cheal. "Keeping our servers free from having to process unnecessary email saves time and money in computing power and infrastructure. Simply put, it lets me do more with less."

www.mailchannels.com
Email: sales@mailchannels.com
Toll free: +1 778 785 6143
Fax: +1 604 677 6320

MailChannels Corporation
Suite 601, 602 Hastings St. West
Vancouver BC Canada V6B 1P2

ABOUT MAILCHANNELS

MailChannels develops and markets next generation technology solutions that ensure the reliable delivery of legitimate email while neutralizing unwanted email threats. MailChannels' solutions allow information technology professionals to more effectively utilize scarce resources and improve end-user productivity by dramatically improving email service availability, reliability and security.

Located in Vancouver, a major North American high-tech center with a history of creating industry leading, mission critical email technologies, MailChannels customers include Internet Service Providers, educational institutions, government organizations and large corporations.