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CITY OF LINCOLN™ NEBRASKA

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Jeff Jones
Network Supervisor, City of Lincoln, Lincoln, NE

SITUATION

Lincoln is the capital and second most populous city in Nebraska. With a population of nearly 260,000, Lincoln's local government includes 3,000 email users and is supported by an IT department of thirty five. "Email is considered a vital part of our communications with both outside partners and vendors," says Jeff Jones, network supervisor for the city. However, the institution's email protection infrastructure imposed a number of productivity and security concerns for both users and IT staff alike.

For several years, the city had deployed a product from Trend Micro to "filter" through all email traffic and attempt to block "junk" messages before they reached the email servers and users' inboxes. This resulted in three issues that are all too common with email content filters.

The first was that, in spite of the filter, users were still getting an average of 10 spam messages in their inboxes every day. Over 500,000 messages every month were scams or phishing attacks of some sort, trying to get users to click a Web link that could potentially compromise their PC. Each of these messages was an attack on the city's infrastructure that could have had serious consequences.

The second issue was that, while thousands of attacks were not blocked by the Trend Micro filter, many legitimate messages were. Every month, over a hundred valid emails were lost in the junk folders. But "it wasn't necessarily the number [of emails] that were getting blocked that was the problem. Even one message not making it through could be a big problem" for Jones and the city.

Finally, even though the filter was significantly less effective than it needed to be, it still required Jones and his team to spend over 40 hours each month updating, tweaking and tuning the Trend Micro software, as well as combing through junk folders to rescue blocked emails. Because of integration issues with their directory services, the city was unable to use any end-user management features, and all junk folders had to be monitored by the IT department.

In aggregate, twenty-five percent of a staff position was wasted, users were unhappy and the city was still at risk. Jones began researching alternative technologies that would address the security and productivity concerns they were facing, while also giving users a greater degree of control over their inboxes.

SOLUTION

He considered a number of well known products – including Barracuda, Sonic-WALL and Symantec – but ultimately made the choice to go with Sendio once he understood the unique technology approach, the "user management capabilities and ease of deployment."

Specifically, the concept of creating their own unique self-managing email community that included all of their contacts and partners, but which excluded people sending junk mail with no business value, seemed to resonate well. Instead of trying to categorize and grade the content of email messages, they decided to simply focus on the senders of messages..

RESULTS

For Jones and his team, the Sendio solution was "extremely straight forward and simple to implement." Once it went live, it eliminated the nearly 500,000 monthly unwanted junk and attack emails completely.

"The greatest benefit has been the ability to allow users to manage their inboxes directly," said Jones. "We have a system that works, using an approach that makes sense," and they spend almost no administrative time doing management (a time savings of 40 hours each month). "With Sendio, virtually all of the problems we were having in the past have been eliminated. It is a product we couldn't live without," says Jones.