Summit Healthcare keeps spam at bay with IBM Lotus Protector

Overview

■ **The Challenge**

Summit Healthcare's small administrative team was being bombarded with hundreds of spam emails every week. Dealing with these emails was distracting staff from their vital work – providing non-clinical services to a busy hospital.

■ **The Solution**

Sysnet (www.sysnet.co.uk), an IBM Premier Business Partner, helped to replace an existing Trend spam filter with IBM Lotus Protector for Mail Security.

■ **Key Benefits**

• Since installing Lotus Protector, users at Summit Healthcare have not received a single spam email.

• Eliminating spam email helps to avoid virus infections, reducing risk for the business.

• Over three years, Lotus Protector delivers a comparable total cost of ownership to the existing subscription-based solution.

Summit Healthcare is a consortium that originally comprised building and civil engineering contractor Sir Robert McAlpine, the Bank of Scotland and Edison Capital Europe Ltd. Working under the private finance initiative, Summit Healthcare built Wishaw General Hospital in North Lanarkshire, Scotland, and continues to provide operational management for all non-clinical services for the hospital – portering, catering, switchboards, security and so on.

To deliver optimum operational efficiency, the company adheres to a strict lean staffing strategy: its three-person administrative team coordinates more than 650 non-clinical staff throughout the hospital. To provide the high levels of service that a busy NHS hospital requires, this small team has little time for non-core business activities – and needs a highly reliable IT infrastructure to support its operations.

"We had a situation where our existing email filtering solution just wasn't working: we were receiving hundreds of spam emails each week, and this was a significant nuisance-factor," says Roddy Fraser, Operations Director at Summit Healthcare. "We felt that we were paying an annual subscription for a service that wasn't actually delivering any value."

Summit Healthcare turned to Sysnet, its main IT supplier, to find a solution. Roddy Fraser comments: "Sysnet recommended IBM Lotus Protector, a solution that could be bought and installed in our own data centre for a one-off cost – moving away from the subscription model where you have to pay out every year."

IBM and the mid-market

"We were initially hesitant because there's a myth in the industry that IBM doesn't work very well with smaller companies. Sysnet soon showed us that this was a misconception: with the development of the IBM Business Partner network and the creation of solutions targeted at the mid-market, IBM has become a much more viable option for businesses like ours."

Lotus Protector is a good example of this IBM strategy. The solution comes in two versions: a hardware appliance for large businesses with multiple email servers and thousands of user accounts, and a packaged software version for businesses with fewer users. The latter version, which Sysnet helped Summit Healthcare implement, runs in a virtualised environment on a standard Dell server. It is easy to install and configure, and requires almost no changes to the existing IT environment.

Smooth implementation

"Installing new software can often be a risky business, causing problems with existing IT systems," comments Roddy Fraser. "With Lotus Protector, we had no such issues: Sysnet did a great job, and everything worked absolutely fine from the moment we put the system into production."

Most important of all, the solution seems to have solved the spam problem: users at Summit report that since the implementation they have not received a single spam email. Since spam is often used as a vehicle for virus-infected attachments and fraudulent techniques such as 'phishing,' the solution is also contributing to better security and reduced business risk.

"By eliminating spam from our inboxes, IBM Lotus Protector gives our staff more time to focus on genuine business communications," concludes Roddy Fraser. "In large organisations, spam might seem no more than a minor annoyance – but for our team, every second counts. Ultimately, any solution that improves our productivity helps us move towards our core objective of providing an excellent service to staff and patients at Wishaw General Hospital."