CUSTOMER SUCCESS

Slater & Gordon Lawyers

Reclaiming 250 Hours a Year of IT Productivity While Providing High Availability for Email with Symantec Solutions

Slater & Gordon Lawyers needed to filter spam and email-borne malware and provide high availability for email. The firm retired its on-premises messaging security software and deployed cloud-based messaging security, Web security, and high availability solutions from Symantec, avoiding spam and virus outbreaks in the three years since deployment. Results include 250 hours of IT staff time reclaimed annually for other tasks, long delays in email delivery alleviated, reduced email-related storage costs, and email failover to the cloud in minutes, avoiding hours-long outages.

Maximizing productivity for a busy law firm

Lawyers work hard, and they work fast. Any activity that takes their focus away from the task at hand represents lost productivity and lost revenue.

At Slater & Gordon Lawyers (S&G), one of Australia's top law firms, the IT department was also working hard to keep spam and malware threats out of lawyers' inboxes—a bit too hard, according to Eric Yew, systems administrator. "We were using MailMarshal Secure Email Gateway to filter spam on premises, and that was working to a certain extent, but we were spending a lot of time managing it," he says. "I was spending about five hours a week tweaking the settings and manually filtering objectionable content."

Filtering spam on premises was also slowing network performance and causing unacceptable delays in email delivery. "We've tripled in size over the past five years, and the volume of email and spam is constantly increasing," says Yew. "We needed a messaging security solution that would be efficient, reliable, and easy to manage, and that could expand easily with the firm's growth."

Keeping spam and threats off the network

Yew decided to investigate cloud-based solutions to filter email off site, before it reaches the firm's network perimeter. "We wanted to keep the load off of our servers and network," says Yew. "We spent a lot of time trying to reduce the impact our previous solution had on our network, but there were still cases when email delivery would be delayed for hours. That's a problem for lawyers who are waiting for critical documents to come through."

ORGANIZATION PROFILE

Website: slatergordon.com.au

Industry: Legal

Headquarters: Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Employees: 1,600

Specialties: insurance claims, commercial, family, and asbestos-related law

SYMANTEC SOLUTIONS

Messaging Security

Web Security

STRATEGIC IT TRENDS

Cloud

Threat Landscape

Why Symantec?

· Requires minimal setup and administration time

· No hardware or software to manage on site

· Filters spam email and Web-borne threats in the cloud, before they reach the network

· New users can be added quickly and easily

The firm decided to deploy Symantec™ Email Security.cloud based on reputation and recommendation from other law firms. With no upfront capital expenditures required and a simple subscription fee that includes 24×7 support, the service allowed S&G to deploy a high-quality messaging security solution quickly and cost effectively. "It took two days at the most to get everything up and running," says Yew.

Combining advanced email antivirus, antispam, and content filtering capabilities in an easy-to-manage solution, Symantec Email Security.cloud captures over 99 percent of spam (95 percent for email with double-byte characters) and protects against known and unknown viruses delivered via email. "In the three years we've been using Symantec Email Security.cloud, we haven't had any significant spam or virus outbreaks," says Yew.

Reclaiming 250 hours of staff time annually

Symantec Email Security.cloud is backed by industry leading service-level agreements (SLAs) for service performance, service availability, email latency, and fault response. Network performance has improved for S&G, and long delays for email delivery have been eliminated.

"We're still trying to find the right balance between cloud solutions and on-premises solutions," says Yew. "Symantec Email Security.cloud makes sense for us because it gives us a great SLA while reducing our labor costs. Adding new users is easy, because it's synchronized with Exchange."

Yew no longer spends five hours a week managing messaging security. "I hardly spend any time at all now," he says. "That's five hours a week I can put into more strategic activities, which adds up to about 250 hours a year."

SOLUTIONS AT A GLANCE

Key Challenges

- Reduce IT staff time spent on messaging security
- Remove filtering load from server infrastructure to alleviate long delays in email delivery
- Keep spam and Web-based threats outside network perimeter
- Quickly integrate acquired firms into messaging and Web security infrastructure

Symantec Products

- Symantec™ Email Security.cloud
- Symantec™ Email Continuity.cloud
- Symantec™ Web Security.cloud

Incumbent

- MailMarshal Secure Email Gateway

Technology Environment

- Server platform: Windows Server 2008 R2
- Applications: Microsoft Exchange Server 2010, Microsoft Office

BUSINESS RESULTS AND TECHNICAL BENEFITS

- 250 hours of IT staff time reclaimed annually for more valuable tasks
- Spam and virus outbreaks avoided in the three years since deployment
- Long delays in email delivery alleviated
- Reduction in email-related storage costs
- Email failover to cloud in minutes, avoiding hours-long outages

Reducing email-related storage costs

As the firm continues to grow rapidly both organically and through acquisitions, filtering email in the cloud will reduce the need to purchase and manage more local storage.

"If we had a MailMarshal system still on premises, that would mean all those emails would be hitting our environment and getting filtered on site," says Yew. "We'd have to store them before we could actually delete them, just to be sure that no critical emails are deleted. That would consume more of our network bandwidth and require additional hardware—mostly storage—to cope with the increased load. By filtering our email in the cloud, before it reaches our Exchange server, we're reducing our email-related storage costs."

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Eric Yew
Systems Administrator
Slater & Gordon Lawyers

Providing cost-effective high availability for email

To ensure that employees can still access email, even if the local Exchange infrastructure goes down, S&G uses Symantec™ Email Continuity.cloud. The service automatically synchronizes corporate directories and user accounts with Exchange. Then, during an outage, the service can be activated to provide email access through a Web browser, mobile device, or Microsoft Outlook. Emails sent and received during an outage are resynchronized when the primary email system is back online.

"Employees receive a notification, and Outlook takes over in minutes for local users," says Yew. "If employees are off site, they can access their email through the Symantec Email Continuity.cloud Web portal. There is minimal disruption to their work, if any."

Providing high availability for an application as essential as email is critical for law firms, he notes. "Our lawyers depend on email to communicate with clients," he says. "It's indispensable. Before, we had a few Exchange outages that lasted hours. That doesn't happen anymore. In terms of lost productivity and revenue, Symantec Email Continuity. cloud can pay for itself with just one or two failovers. It's a very cost effective way to provide high availability for email—firms can essentially cut their server and storage costs for email in half, because there's no need to maintain a local or remote standby infrastructure."

Protecting users from Web-based threats

Some of S&G's recent acquisitions were already Symantec™ Web Security.cloud customers, and the firm plans to implement the solution companywide in the coming months. "We realize that most threats nowadays are coming from the Web," says Yew. "Slater & Gordon has a very strong public image that we need to protect. We're very visible and high profile, which means we can be a focus of attack from external parties. That's why we need to ensure that our Web browsing is fully secure, especially now that social media is so prevalent. Social engineering is one of the main ways that threats get through, so it's important for us to protect our perimeter."

Integrating acquired firms quickly

Many of S&G's acquisitions are already Symantec.cloud customers, which makes integration quick and easy. "We're able to quickly integrate acquired firms into our messaging security infrastructure," says Yew. "It only takes as long as DNS takes to propagate—about 48 hours at the most."

That means IT can spend more time developing new services to help the firm be more efficient. "We're getting a very high return from Symantec.cloud solutions," says Yew. "They're low maintenance, they work well, and they remove threats before they even get to our perimeter. That makes a lot of sense for us, and from what we're seeing in the field, for a lot of other law firms as well."

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