

Iroquois Memorial Hospital & Resident Home

A customer success story

Iroquois Memorial Hospital & Resident Home needed to control malware and spam on its network of patient care workstations and servers. With Sophos, the hospital obtained effective anti-malware and anti-spam functionality, as well as an extra layer of protection that it wasn't expecting.

Business challenge

Watseka, Illinois-based Iroquois Memorial Hospital & Resident Home serves the healthcare needs of residents in east-central Illinois and west-central Indiana. With 49 staffed beds, the hospital draws on a full range of medical specialties to address 70,000 patient visits a year. The main hospital campus, three satellite clinics, and a regional healthcare center are supported by a single data center at the hospital. Jim McKenna, IT director, is responsible for ensuring that the 303 computer workstations and 17 servers remain spam and malware free.

One of McKenna's first tasks as IT director was to address the organization's spam problem. "It was the single most frustrating issue users were experiencing. About 70% of all email was spam," says McKenna. Viruses were also making their way onto the network and infecting workstations. The hospital had an anti-virus product and used spam filtering options within its email system, but these tools proved ineffective.

"A lot of filtering methods that were the convention when we deployed our previous anti-virus and spam solutions didn't work in a healthcare facility," explains McKenna. Traditional spam filters that block email based on keywords like *breast* or *Viagra*, for example, run the risk of blocking legitimate communication regarding patient care. "Everything you can think of, we were being hit with left and right," says McKenna.

Customer at a glance



Positive business outcomes:

- Previous anti-virus and spam solutions were ineffective and cumbersome.
- Sophos completely eliminates spam in an environment where others fail.
- Managed appliances ensure real-time updates and easy, centralized management.
- Sophos saves the data center from heat damage.

Sophos solutions

- Sophos Endpoint Security and Data Protection
- Sophos Email Security and Data Protection
- Sophos Web Security and Control

Number of users

- 430

The hospital's spam and anti-virus tools were also difficult to manage. The previous anti-virus platform was cumbersome to deploy, maintain and update. It lacked backend technical support and functionality. McKenna and his team needed to know how users were accessing the Internet and what they were doing once they got there. "You can't risk having systems compromised when dealing with medical records," says McKenna. "It's not enough to have anti-virus merely sitting on the sidelines."

Technology solution

McKenna convinced management that Sophos was the answer to the organization's problems. "We needed something robust. If you're going to fight spam—the biggest problem our industry faces—then you're going to need a big gun," says McKenna.

McKenna implemented Sophos Endpoint Security and Data Protection, Sophos Web Security and Control, and Sophos Email Security and Data Protection to protect the network. "Within 24 hours of deploying Sophos, the spam that was hitting the hospital was reduced by close to 90%. Twelve hours after that, it was completely gone—with no loss of service. No blocked emails. It was just amazing," says McKenna.

Sophos Email Security and Data Protection is effective at stopping spam for Iroquois Memorial Hospital because it uses multiple layers to interpret what spam is within the environment. It can eliminate more than 99% of spam with Sender Genotype technology, which identifies spam originating from botnets, and real-time updates that reflect SophosLabs'™ latest research findings. "A living response to these threats is hard to beat," says McKenna.

Unlike the previous anti-virus and anti-spam products the hospital was using, the Sophos web and email appliances are easy to install and maintain. The managed appliances are monitored by Sophos 24x7 to protect the email and web gateway from known and unknown threats and unwanted content around the clock.

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Furthermore, Sophos has an intuitive "three clicks to anywhere" management console, making it easy to use. Sophos Web Security and Control also enables McKenna to audit Internet access in an effort to prevent abuse and malware infection via the web. "The Sophos Web appliance saved us from having to come up with another auditing system," explains McKenna, "in that it provides more detail than expected."

Business results

The Sophos products have tackled the problems they were brought in for, but it's the features that McKenna was not immediately aware of that have won him over. In November 2008, the hospital's data center nearly succumbed to heat damage when, in the midst of an ice storm, a large accumulation of ice fell from the roof and disabled the AC unit used to cool the data center. McKenna, who was home at the time, received urgent email messages warning him that there was a dangerous heat issue in the data center that required immediate attention. The messages didn't come from hospital personnel or any of the servers—they came from the Sophos Web Appliance.

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As McKenna arrived at the hospital, he received another message saying the appliance was going into emergency shutdown. “It was like the machine threw itself on a grenade for me!” says McKenna. “You hear of stories about people who have bought used cars and didn’t know they had air bags until they were saved by them in an accident. I felt the same way.”

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McKenna had recently purchased a BlackBerry to enable real-time connections with the hospital’s servers in case an emergency like this was to happen, but had not yet installed the protocols on the servers and phone. “The Sophos Web Appliance had my email address and—little did I know—was already set up to let me know of critical events like this one. That is the kind of foresight that sets Sophos head and shoulders above anyone else,” he says.

Yet another instance of the appliance providing protection above and beyond its intended purpose for occurred when the hospital was struck by lightning. The power was knocked out, and the generators came on, but some of the switches were not plugged into the emergency power. As a result, the network was down. The Sophos Web Security and Control appliance sent McKenna an email advising him of the problem. What’s more, the appliance notified McKenna before the nurses did.

“The Sophos Web Appliance is a team player,” says McKenna. “If you pay attention to how it’s working and what it’s responding to, everything else in your data center benefits.”