

St Helens and Knowsley Hospitals Trust

HEALTHCARE

The hospital trust that covers the St Helens and Knowsley area of Merseyside found that its existing anti-virus solution could not cope, and that spam attacks were impacting its 7000 email users. The trust chose Sophos solutions at the gateway and desktop because they were simple to implement and manage enterprise-wide, and were backed up by 24-hour technical support. This comprehensive protection has eliminated viruses and stopped 99% of spam.



Business challenge

St Helens and Knowsley Hospitals NHS Trust provides the full range of general treatments to the populations of St Helens, Knowsley, Widnes and South Liverpool.

The trust's main sites include a regional specialist centre for burns and plastic surgery, based at Whiston Hospital, and the Newton Community Hospital, which provides a nurse-led, 30-bed intermediate and community care service. St Helens Hospital houses general medical and surgical services along with dedicated units for day surgery and ophthalmology, plus a minor injuries unit.

More than 100,000 accident and emergency cases are handled by the trust's hospitals each year, together with over 60,000 admissions and a similar number of new outpatients.

Since 2004, the hospital trust has been the victim of computer virus outbreaks, infection with spyware, and spam attacks such as phishing. IT and information services are handled by St Helens and Knowsley Health Informatics. According to its development manager, Phil Corrin, the legacy McAfee anti-virus product they had been using could not handle the

Key facts

Organisation

St Helens and Knowsley Hospitals NHS Trust

Locations

South Merseyside, UK (3 sites)

No. of desktops

3000

No of servers

20, plus storage area network MS Exchange 2003 4-node clustered to SAN

No. of mailboxes

7000

Email traffic

1000 inbound per day

Solutions

Sophos Anti-Virus
PureMessage for Windows/
Exchange

"Support and advice on the installation of PureMessage was fantastic, and both pre- and post-sales support were always available."

Phil Corrin, Development Manager, St Helens and Knowsley Health Informatics

demands placed on it – constant upgrades of the anti-virus engine, as well as normal virus updates, created holes in the organisation's protection. Furthermore, it had no enterprise management features and the client agent was a heavy consumer of memory. The trust needed to replace its existing anti-virus solution on 3000 desktops and implement more comprehensive and robust protection at the email gateway. Improving network security and eliminating spam from 7000 inboxes would allow staff to concentrate on caring for patients.

Technology solution

The trust's substantial network is centred around a storage area network (SAN). After a brief evaluation period, Corrin and his team installed Sophos PureMessage™ on a 4-node Exchange server clustered to the SAN, and deployed Sophos Anti-Virus™ across all 3000 desktop computers on the network. PureMessage provides protection at the gateway from viruses and spam by scanning all internal, inbound and outbound email messages and Exchange server stores. Sophos Anti-Virus ensures that endpoint servers, desktops and laptops remain free from viruses, Trojans, worms and malicious spyware. "Support and advice on the installation were fantastic," Corrin enthuses, "and sales information and support were always available."

At present, the Informatics department and its users are happy with virus detection and basic spam filtering, but PureMessage is a future-proof solution. Based on a scalable architecture, it uniquely offers fully integrated anti-virus, anti-spam and policy enforcement capabilities, so users can also be protected from unwanted attachments and content, with the minimum of false positives. "So far, we have had no issues with authorised messages being blocked by PureMessage," comments Corrin.

Both Sophos Anti-Virus and PureMessage automatically receive the latest anti-virus updates and new spam rules created by experts in Sophos's global network of threat analysis centres, SophosLabs™.



New £250 million facility planned for completion in 2010

The powerful technologies which enable the high level of security provided by Sophos products are complemented by a range of tools that simplify and automate administrative tasks. Enterprise Console™ enables key administrative tasks such as installation, configuration and updating of Sophos Anti-Virus to be performed across the network from a central point according to policies set by the administrator.

Business results

Sophos Anti-Virus has solved the problems of managing virus protection across a large network, and Corrin was particularly impressed with the simplicity of Enterprise Console, which gives a complete and up-to-date view of the protection status of each computer on the network. Any computer that does not have the latest protection can be updated from the console.

PureMessage Manager is equally easy to use, enabling management of virus scanning and threat reduction features, as well as spam thresholds, quarantines and blocking options. An intuitive end user interface and spam digests also allow end users to review quarantine contents easily. According to Corrin, "PureMessage is capturing up to 99% of the spam we get." The trust receives in excess of 1000 external emails a day, 15% of which are spam. "Spam is an email service killer," he claims. "Our users do not want unsolicited bulk email, and the implementation of PureMessage solved the problem virtually instantly."

Continuing technical support is a critical requirement for the Informatics department. "As part of a front-line community service, we are a 24/7 operation, and it is essential that support meets our service demands," says Corrin. He is reassured by the standard Sophos licensing, which includes unlimited 24-hour telephone, email and online support, 365 days a year.

Corrin concludes, "Sophos products are much easier to manage and update than our previous solution. Sophos Anti-Virus is less demanding of overhead and Enterprise Console helps us manage rollout and updating. Performance is excellent, and what I really appreciate is the simplicity, reliability and scalability of the products."

To find out how Sophos products can help protect your organisation, visit www.sophos.com/products