

Martin County Board of County Commissioners

GOVERNMENT

When the Board of County Commissioners in Martin County, Florida experienced a surge in spam, it found that existing open source solutions were high maintenance and offered little control to its 800-plus end users. Installing PureMessage at the gateway significantly reduced helpdesk calls and the administrative load on the IT department – and kept users' inboxes free of unwanted email.



Business challenge

Martin County is one of 67 counties in the state of Florida and was established in 1925. Martin County Board of County Commissioners provides general government services such as fire and rescue, library services, and building inspections, as well as overseeing the development of public infrastructure, determining zoning and land use regulations, and setting real estate taxes. The Board of County Commissioners is similar in nature to a board of directors of a major corporation – approving operating and capital budgets, passing ordinances, and taking

actions that provide for the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of Martin County.

The Board's twelve departments are spread across two dozen sites, and have over 800 computer users that need to be protected from viruses and spam. According to Tim Murnane, systems administrator responsible for the Board's data center operations, "For a couple of years we used open source solutions such as SpamAssassin and MIMEDefang, but these were too limited. They required far too much work to maintain

Key facts

Organization

Martin County Board of County Commissioners

Location

Stuart, Florida

No of users

800+

Email traffic

475,000 emails per month

Servers

Linux

Solution

PureMessage for UNIX

"PureMessage is a proven technology and rock solid! I would definitely recommend Sophos to other institutions looking for email gateway protection."

Tim Murnane, Systems Administrator, Martin County Board of County Commissioners

and offered little control for end users. At that time, inbound message volume was between 30,000 and 60,000 per day, of which SpamAssassin identified about 50% as spam, but false positives were increasing.”

In 2005, there was a substantial increase in spam levels, and Murnane decided to look for a more robust gateway security solution. Three vendors were shortlisted, including Sophos, and a rigorous set of performance criteria determined. In summary, more efficient detection of spam and malicious code was needed, with more control available to end users. Outbound filtering was also essential to filter viruses and spam and enable the Board to adhere to the privacy requirements of legislation such as HIPAA – the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act.

Technology solution

When researching potential solutions, Tim Murnane turned to the Magic Quadrant produced by technology industry analysts, Gartner Inc., which showed that Sophos offered exactly what the county required. Sophos PureMessage® was chosen because it integrated anti-virus, anti-spam and policy enforcement at the email gateway and performed well compared with the other vendors’ solutions. Murnane claims, “Everything went smoothly –



feedback was collected and processed from ten users in Martin County, and Sophos achieved top billing in a hierarchy of tests. Although we didn’t have strict benchmarks, I was impressed with the lack of false positives, which is important to us, and I appreciated the visibility I have into PureMessage’s rules.” He adds, “Anti-virus protection was also superior to the rest, and I like the fact that Sophos owns the technology.”

PureMessage for UNIX is based on a highly scalable architecture and was originally installed on the Board’s gateway Linux servers. Martin County now protects its entire network from email-borne viruses, Trojans, worms, spyware, and spam. By countering the rapid evolution of new spam techniques, PureMessage keeps inboxes free of unsolicited bulk email and helps maintain network performance and employee productivity. Advanced detection techniques include Genotype® technology that blocks families of spam campaigns and viruses, ensuring that the network is protected against previously unseen threats even before specific detection is available.

Business results

According to Tim Murnane, “The rollout of PureMessage went without a hitch – the Sophos rep went the extra mile and continues to check that all is running well. Support is a high priority for us, and I find Sophos technical support is excellent. Engineers are thorough and knowledgeable and any issues are escalated as necessary.”

Once PureMessage was deployed, there was a significant drop in helpdesk calls. Murnane explains, “The reduction in viruses, spam, and false positives has saved many hours of troubleshooting. The IT department has also received a lot of thanks from users about the sharp decline in unwanted mail.” Email traffic has increased exponentially in just a few years, and with levels as high as 475,000 a month, PureMessage identified and blocked 74% of messages as spam. At the same time, 12% of email was stopped because it contained viruses.

As Murnane puts it, “PureMessage is a proven technology and rock solid! I would definitely recommend Sophos to my peers.”

To find out how Sophos products can help protect your organization, visit www.sophos.com/products, call toll-free 1-866-866-2802, or email us at nasales@sophos.com.