

At-Bristol

EDUCATION

At-Bristol's thousands of visitors are free to use a network of public computers to surf the web. This resulted in the client computers being infected and, together with large amounts of spam, is impacting severely on performance levels. To provide full-spectrum protection, At-Bristol has implemented Sophos solutions across its entire infrastructure to protect the gateway, endpoint and web.



Business challenge

At-Bristol is a science centre based at the £450 million Bristol Harbour complex.

The centre contains a planetarium, travelling exhibitions, classrooms, school workshops and a number of hands-on educational exhibits. Since it opened in 2000 At-Bristol has received more than three million visitors.

At-Bristol has 110 Windows®-based desktops and laptops, of which 20 are public facing and 30 used in classrooms. Visitors are encouraged to use them to surf the internet for topics related to the centre's exhibits. While certain websites

are blocked – such as hotmail or adult content – visitors are free to search for whatever they wish. This threw up a major challenge, as such public access meant that At-Bristol's computers were being infected by viruses, spyware and other malware every few days. At-Bristol also has a legal responsibility to ensure that its public computers remain free of inappropriate online material, which is particularly important considering the high number of children that visit the centre.

In addition to protecting the public-facing elements of its network, At-Bristol was also receiving approximately 16,000

Key facts

Organisation

At-Bristol

Headquarters

Bristol, UK

No of users

110+

Sophos solutions

Enterprise Security and Control

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Ed Williams, Senior Technical Engineer, At-Bristol

pieces of spam per week. There are approximately 80 email account holders within the organisation and not only was the sheer volume of spam distracting them from their core duties, but it was impacting significantly on network speed.

Malware and spam, however, were not the only issues affecting the network. "There were programs running in the background that had been downloaded by the public," says Ed Williams, Senior Technical Engineer, At-Bristol. "This slowed our system and the smooth operation of our online exhibits."

At-Bristol is also planning to upgrade its email servers in early 2008 and needed to ensure that its new system was fully protected.

Technology solution

To meet all of the above challenges At-Bristol decided to re-evaluate its entire security set-up. During this process the IT team realised that the organisation needed a fully-integrated solution that was easy to use and maintain. As a result, Sophos solutions were chosen to cover the entire network.

"The key factors in choosing Sophos were integration, simplicity of management, maximum protection and minimal impact on users," says Williams.

Sophos solutions provide protection for every aspect of an organisation's network. Email travelling into a system is scanned and, if required, blocked, while web access is monitored and any content deemed unsuitable restricted. Desktops and laptops are also protected individually, ensuring that users do not introduce malware into the network either deliberately or accidentally.

"At the gateway we're using the Sophos ES4000 Email Appliance™ to stop any unwanted emails," says Williams. "To ensure that our computers are secure we're using Sophos



Public computers increase the risk of malware infection

Anti-Virus™ and Sophos Client Firewall™. Web browsing is managed through the WS1000 Sophos Web Appliance™."

Both appliances are installed directly into At-Bristol's servers. Incorporating Sophos's Genotype® technology, they provide powerful proactive protection against threats by analysing the actual behaviour of code and then blocking anything that is acting suspiciously from executing. The appliances and endpoint solutions are linked directly to SophosLabs™ – a global network of threat detection centres that analyse threats as they emerge and then update At-Bristol's defences every five minutes.

Business results

Sophos Anti-Virus and Sophos Client Firewall – part of Endpoint Security and Control – have reduced the risk of malware being introduced through At-Bristol's public computers significantly.

Spam has been practically eliminated, with the Email Appliance sitting in front of the organisation's mail server and filtering out any unwanted messages.

"It used to take each email account holder between 10 to 20 minutes a day to remove spam from their inboxes," says Williams. "That's already a saving of between 66 and 133 hours a week in lost productivity."

The Web Appliance provides safe web browsing and ensures that At-Bristol remains compliant with child safety legislation by blocking unsuitable sites. It also recently helped deal with a severe network performance issue, which threatened to crash the organisation's internet access.

"When we experienced an almost total loss of web bandwidth we were able to use the Web Appliance to trace this to an automatic updater for an application we were running. It was then a simple job to establish a policy that disabled this and any similar automatic updates."

As well as ensuring that the public use its computers responsibly, the ability to monitor each computer on the network is also a great way of improving the service At-Bristol offers its visitors. "For the first time we can log user traffic," says Williams, "which gives us an excellent insight into what the public computers are being used for and how we can improve the user experience. Not only that, but we can offer the hard working staff a safer and more secure IT environment."

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