

The Weather Channel

Marshal Helps the Forecast Remain Clear at The Weather Channel

When The Weather Channel, a 24-hour cable network dedicated to providing weather news from around the globe, deployed MailMarshal SMTP, they were facing two vital technology issues that needed immediate resolutions.

Background

In recent years, The Weather Channel had been troubled by worms, self-replicating viruses that reside in a computer's active memory. Though these worms do not typically alter files, their continual replication consumes system resources, slows or halts other tasks and can eventually infect an entire network.

The company viewed these viruses as a dangerous threat to both its internal and external operations. With approximately 200,000 e-mails per day coming through their system, they had to find a way to effectively protect their enterprise. In

addition, the organization was in the process of rolling out WeatherFacts, a service designed to provide weather information, via e-mail, to major hotel chains around the world. WeatherFacts is a revenue-generating product and any delays caused by harmful e-mails or a slow content filtering solution could potentially cost the company money.

These two issues led The Weather Channel to deploy Marshal's award-winning content scanning solution, MailMarshal SMTP.

Summary

Since 1982, The Weather Channel has brought timely weather information to the world. Beginning as a 24-hour, 7-day television network devoted entirely to weather, it has expanded across several mediums to bring the breaking weather to its viewers and users.

Benefits

The Weather Channel now uses MailMarshal to filter spam and obscene content from the 200,000 e-mail messages per day that their nearly 800 associates receive. Based on figures available with MailMarshal's reports, 50-60 percent of the messages are identified as either containing a virus or as spam. Those e-mails are now eliminated at the gateway. As a result, valuable network bandwidth and server resources are conserved.

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Offers a Comprehensive Solution

Two key drivers led The Weather Channel to search for a content scanning solution: a recent influx of damaging viruses and the launch of WeatherFacts, a revenue-generating application that required a secure and reliable network to handle the thousands of e-mails the company planned to distribute on a daily basis.

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To help them present a stronger case for investing in a powerful content scanning solution, the team of Christina Neustadt, director of customer service, and John Penrod, director of network architecture, began by first researching the costs associated with responding to viruses. They analyzed the costs in terms of time used by the help desk to respond and repair desktops and the productivity lost on the part of the end user. The team determined that it costs an average company approximately \$50 per incident, per hour with recovery time averaging anywhere from four hours to one day to resolve the issue. The expenses involved in response and repair, helped Neustadt and Penrod create a strong business case for deploying MailMarshal SMTP to filter e-mail for spam, obscene content and most importantly the types of viruses and worms that had damaged their network in the past.

The Weather Channel elected to go with MailMarshal SMTP as their content scanning solution for a variety of reasons. Most notably, it offered a comprehensive solution that went well beyond content filtering, their most urgent need at the time. It also delivers anti-virus protection, robust reporting and e-mail archiving for a safe and productive working environment.

A Powerful Content Filtering Tool

Since its deployment, MailMarshal SMTP has been responsible for preventing tens of thousands of e-mails

containing spam or viruses from ever reaching The Weather Channel. It filters spam and obscene content from the approximately 200,000 messages per day that their 800 associates receive. "Between 50 and 60 percent of the e-mail messages are identified as either containing a virus or as spam. Those e-mails are eliminated at the gateway and as a result, valuable network bandwidth and server resources are conserved," explained Neustadt.

MailMarshal also scans the 300-400 incoming viewer comment e-mails the network receives each week. Since that process has been automated with MailMarshal SMTP, the IT administrator previously assigned to this task is now free to focus on more pressing issues.

Their vigilant monitoring of incoming e-mail along with their use of MailMarshal's numerous capabilities has enabled The Weather Channel to respond quickly to major threats. For example, when faced with the SoBig.F virus, a major worm that rapidly infected computers around the world, The Weather Channel was able to configure MailMarshal SMTP to stop the infected attachments from reaching its network. Whereas a number of companies had to shutdown their systems because of SoBig.F, the Weather Channel was able to continue to conduct business with minimal impact from this virus.

In addition to scanning incoming e-mail, the all-weather network's use of MailMarshal to filter and route

content for the more than 60,000 e-mails distributed by WeatherFacts, has contributed to the company's bottom line. Because WeatherFacts is a revenue-generating product any delays resulting from a slow content filtering solution could potentially cost the company money. MailMarshal has helped to prevent any such issues.

MailMarshal's features have also been beneficial to the Human Resources department at The Weather Channel. By using the product's scanning capabilities to enforce policies related to appropriate e-mail use, the company has lowered the potential for loss of confidential data.

Conclusion

The Weather Channel received a return-on-investment almost immediately due to the multiple areas the product serves and how quickly and easily it was implemented and tuned to fit their needs.

The Weather Channel has not only been able to find a solution to the initial performance and availability problems caused by virus infections with MailMarshal SMTP, the IT department has expanded on the product's original purpose and increased the benefits that the company received.



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