

SEGA Corporation

Eliminating Spam In Its Tracks with Multi-Layered Solutions from Symantec



At SEGA Corporation, a global amusement and game software firm, 3,000 emails an hour consisted of 70 percent spam. This huge influx was wasting staff time and slowing email servers. SEGA sought to address this problem by automatically deleting spam, so it needed a solution that could be trusted to never block legitimate email. Symantec's multi-layered solution, combining Mail Security 8160 and 8260 devices, over 92 percent of English and non-English spam, with zero false positives.

The Challenge

Established in 1960, SEGA Corporation is a worldwide leader in interactive both inside and outside the home, encompassing consumer business, amusement machine sales, and amusement center operations. The company develops, publishes and distributes interactive entertainment software products for a variety of hardware platforms including PC, wireless devices, and those manufactured by Nintendo, Microsoft and Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. SEGA Corporation has 34 domestic and 28 overseas offices, and about 3,500 employees.

Spam was becoming an increasingly urgent problem for SEGA. With all domestic email environments integrated in one data center, all SEGA's Internet mail goes through one gateway. With a flow rate of about 3,000 emails an hour, SEGA IT staff discovered that about 70 percent of all mail received was spam. "SEGA's operations cannot work properly without email," says Mr. Takamitsu Shoji, Team Manager, Information Systems Department, SEGA Corporation. "So increasing spam posed a potential threat to the entire company."

The volume of spam caused decreased productivity for all SEGA's users, due to the time spent deleting spam and the danger of deleting a legitimate email by accident. A second concern was decreased system resources. Spam was straining SEGA's Microsoft Exchange and Message Transmission Agent (MTA) servers, and contributing to email delays. "Spam, combined with other factors, caused two-to-three-hour delays for messages transferring through MTA," Mr. Shoji says. In addition, the company planned to begin email archiving, so SEGA needed a way to remove spam messages before archiving took place.

"End users from each department commented that they receive fewer spam."

Mr. Takamitsu Shoji

Team Manager, Information Systems Department
Autonomous Province of SEGA Corporation

ORGANIZATION PROFILE

Established in 1960, SEGA Corporation is a worldwide leader in interactive both inside and outside the home, encompassing consumer business, amusement machine sales, and amusement center operations. The company develops, publishes and distributes interactive entertainment software products for a variety of hardware platforms including PC, wireless devices, and those manufactured by Nintendo, Microsoft and Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. SEGA Corporation has 34 domestic and 28 overseas offices, and about 3,500 employees.

INDUSTRY

Entertainment

SOLUTION

Messaging management;
mail security

Symantec solutions eliminate over 92 percent of English and non-English spam with no false positives

The Solution

SEGA's IT team evaluated different anti-spam solutions from December 2005 to June 2006, testing six different products by renting one from each company and connecting it to the gateway for two weeks. Though the team evaluated each software solution with many factors in mind, detection error rate was particularly important—since the company planned to automatically delete spam, false positives would be unacceptable. Symantec™ Mail Security 8160 and 8260 models combined had the best detection error rate of all the solutions tested.

SEGA also needed a system that would take little staff time to manage. “Operation management is important, and we must be able to do it remotely,” notes Mr. Yuji Urai, Information Systems Department, SEGA Corporation. “Once the initial installation and configuration is done, we need our spam protection to keep functioning without anyone working on the main operation.”

Here again, Mail Security was a good fit. The solution's server method requires very little maintenance after installations, and does not require tunings to increase the spam mail determination rate.

SEGA's IT staff also needed a way to keep down licensing costs. For the redundant configuration SEGA wanted, other vendors would have charged twice as much, because

SEGA would have had to purchase two licenses. Symantec offers a single server license, which has made a big difference to SEGA's bottom line—especially since SEGA needed to deploy the solution to 6,000 employee and contractor accounts.

In July 2006, SEGA selected Symantec's Mail Security 8160 and 8260 appliances, and deployed the solution that October. SEGA's secure zone now has two Mail Security 8160 and 8260 devices installed at both sides of a Layer 2 switch. Mail Security 8160 eliminates a large swath of spam volume by identifying spam-like behavior (such as thousands of messages sent at once). The system sends a message that mail delivery may be delayed. Legitimate emails still get through, but since spammers have a better chance of succeeding when they can deliver their messages rapidly, most spam software is set to move on to greener pastures if it encounters a slowdown. Any email that gets by the 8160 is tested next by the 8260 device, which checks for spam, and also viruses, before allowing it into the system.

For the first six months, SEGA's IT staff tested the system by having email messages flagged, rather than removed. After six months with no false positives, the solution was put into full production. Now, messages identified as spam are automatically deleted.

The Results

Since deployment, the multi-layered Mail Security continues to work with 0 false positives, and over 92 percent of English and non-English spam is deleted before it ever reaches users' inboxes. “End users from each department commented that they receive fewer spam,” Mr. Shoji says.

Mail Security's accuracy allows SEGA to take this measure without fear of accidentally deleting vital information. Mr. Urai says, “With almost no chance of detection error, it allows us to deal with spam before it ever reaches users, preventing the loss of business efficiency.”

SOLUTION AT A GLANCE

Key Challenges

- Reduce IT staff and user time spent dealing with spam
- Preserve system resources to avoid email delays
- Minimize IT staff time needed to manage solution
- Eliminate spam in preparation for email archiving

Solution

Eliminated most spam from email system; re-captured resources previously wasted on spam; improved mail system performance

Symantec Products

- Symantec™ Mail Security 8160
- Symantec™ Mail Security 8260

Technology Environment

Servers running Microsoft Exchange® and Message Transmission Agent

Business Results

- Over 92 percent of English and non-English spam eliminated
- Zero false positives, allowing for automatic deletion
- Business efficiency increased
- System resource use decreased, eliminating 2-3 hour email delays
- IT staff time spent on spam reduced

“With almost no chance of detection error, it allows us to deal with spam before it ever reaches users, preventing the loss of business efficiency.”

Mr. Yuji Urai

Information Systems Department
SEGA Corporation