

“
 We don't see
 spam anymore
 and I have
 not had any
 complaints since
 we installed the
 IronPort device.
 ”

PHIL O'NEILL

Head of ICT Service Delivery
 Brighton & Hove City Council



IronPort Keeps Spam at Bay for Seaside Council

SITUATION

Based on the south coast of England, Brighton & Hove City Council provides social services, education and refuse collection to its 248,000 residents. It has a net budget of £270.8 million and eight offices across the city. Brighton & Hove City Council has a large number of email users - about 9,000 - and many addresses are published in the public domain. This makes it an easy target for spam. At its peak, the Council had two to three people working purely to keep the tide of spam at bay, which was a waste of resources and not the best allocation of staff skills.

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BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL AT A GLANCE

Email: 9,000 users
 Challenge: Provide an affordable and effective solution to prevent a growing amount of spam reaching staff's mailboxes

THE IRONPORT ADVANTAGE

- Spam has virtually disappeared and complaints no longer come from users; Filters are automatically updated from Brightmail throughout the day
- IT staff are more productive and no longer spend their time maintaining black and whitelists or dealing with user problems caused by spam
- ROI will be achieved within the first year as staff are now deployed more effectively within the organisation
- Global blacklists from Senderbase are automatically updated constantly
- Offsetting the spam checking to the IronPort freed up resources on the internal mail servers
- Back-up appliance ready in event of a system failure

TECHNICAL CHALLENGES

The problem for the Council was that such large volumes of spam required regular surveillance and maintenance. In particular, Brighton & Hove did not have the support available to maintain a black and whitelist that could discriminate between spam and non-spam emails. "At any given time, we might have two or three people doing a maintenance piece of work to keep our spam at bay," says Phil O'Neill, head of ICT service delivery at Brighton & Hove City Council. "These were also highly skilled people doing what is essentially boring work."

By November last year, he knew the spam problem was out of control when one particularly offensive spam email reached the mailboxes of council staff. "This email was offering a rape video for sale and being sent to hundreds of people," says O'Neill. "And it was almost impossible to identify where it had come from." By this point, 40% of all emails sent to the Council contained spam or viruses.

THE IRONPORT SOLUTION

The Council already had Clearswift MAILsweeper for SMTP in place, which it used for content management and anti-virus protection. This also provided anti-spam facilities, but Brighton & Hove decided not to use this function to address its burgeoning spam problem because the programme failed to address the task of automatically maintaining black and white lists. So O'Neill and his team looked for a suitable replacement that would deliver a comprehensive email security policy.

"Some of my staff had heard of IronPort because they are constantly talking to suppliers about their products and services," recounts O'Neill. He also looked at a software solution that sits on a Linux platform and an external mail service provider. The cost of the latter proved too prohibitive, however, and by this point, O'Neill's



Ironport's C300 appliance covered its cost in the first year.

staff were already singing the praises of the C300 appliance after seeing a demonstration with their security services reseller Integralis.

After a successful evaluation period lasting a couple of months, the Council decided to purchase IronPort's C300 device at the beginning this year. "I have not calculated the figures, but I would be very surprised if the C300 did not cover its cost in the first year, simply because of the large number of emails coming in and hitting all our council members," says O'Neill. "It was not just the time taken by my own technical staff blocking and reacting to unwanted messages, but time was also being wasted by people reading unnecessary emails."

Another advantage from O'Neill's perspective is the amount of analysis the C300 produces, which saves him considerable time in calculating these figures himself. "I can then produce these numbers when asked to give data for the Council," he adds. "Last month 52,000 connections were dropped from blacklist senders and 12,000 connections throttled from suspect senders. A further 293,000 emails were received, of which 21% were blocked as spam."



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ABOUT IRONPORT SYSTEMS

IronPort Systems is the leading email security products provider for organizations ranging from small businesses to the Global 2000. The company has developed a family of email security appliances, the IronPort C-Series™, that offer breakthrough performance, multi-layer protection, and best-of-breed options. IronPort is driving new standards and providing innovative products for those faced with the monumental task of managing, protecting, and growing mission-critical email systems. For more information on IronPort products and services, visit: www.ironport.com