



Greenville City School System

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Addressing Exorbitant Spam Emails Result in Substantial Time and Cost Efficiencies

“We were receiving 31 million emails a month and from these, approximately 30 million emails were spam.”

The seemingly insurmountable challenge of dramatically reducing spam and freeing up technology resources to focus on core business priorities was what Larry Jones, IT Network Administrator at Greenville City School System needed to solve. After implementing Proofpoint’s protection and privacy solutions, Greenville experienced a 96 percent reduction in spam, which saved approximately three hours each day in manually trawling emails for possible spam or other security threats.

Located in Tennessee, the Greenville City School System consists of four elementary schools, one middle school and one high school, serving approximately 2,750 students. The system also serves as the fiscal agent for the Greene Technology Center, which provides technology education classes for students in all county high schools.

CHALLENGE: Stemming the Flow of Spam

The Greenville City School System has over 440 staff, including approximately 230 teachers and administrators. Like most educational institutions, the school has very strict controls for inbound and outbound emails, to ensure that both educators and students in particular are not exposed to any inappropriate content. Managing this was the responsibility of three IT staff, including Jones.

However, according to Jones, the security solution that the Greenville City School System was using prior to Proofpoint simply did not provide the adequate safeguards to protect against nuisance spam and other malicious emails. With Internet bots able to easily scan teachers’ email addresses that were published on the Greenville City School System’s website, Greenville was an easy target for security attacks. In addition, Greenville’s previous security provider had its development center overseas, meaning that if the school experienced a major problem, they would not get a resolution until the next day.



ABOUT

Located in Tennessee, the Greenville City School System consists of four elementary schools, one middle school and one high school, with over 230 teachers and administrators serving approximately 2,750 students.

CHALLENGE

- Bandwidth pressures due to exorbitant number of spam emails
- Lost productivity and cost inefficiencies
- Protect sensitive data in line with compliance mandates
- Slow turnaround in resolving security issues with previous provider

PRODUCTS DEPLOYED

- Proofpoint Enterprise Protection[™]
- Proofpoint Enterprise Privacy[™]

RESULTS

- Spam and malicious emails reduced by 96 percent
- Approximately 60 hours per month saved in reviewing emails for possible security threats
- Bandwidth savings with spam being stopped at the network perimeter
- Technology resources freed up to focus on core business requirements

“The first line of defense for us was with our email firewalls – yet even though we were constantly tweaking the filter settings, we were still inundated with the hundreds of thousands of spam emails that kept pouring in.

“The process we had in place was that if an email looked suspicious, we had a separate Windows folder to drop the EML files. Then, John Wright, a member of our IT team would manually trawl through about two to three thousand emails each day to review these files on the server, which would take three hours. That’s 15 hours a week of not fixing computers or doing things that could be directly helping our students.”

Jones knew that this process was time intensive, inefficient and meant that the Greenville City School System was susceptible to security threats. After talking to a colleague at another educational institution, Jones learned about Proofpoint’s protection and privacy solutions and decided that it was the best solution to meet Greenville’s business and technology needs.

SOLUTION: An Adaptive and Adept Offering

Greenville City School System uses Proofpoint Enterprise Protection, the industry’s most comprehensive security threat classification and email security management solution that protects against phishing, virus, spam and other email borne malware in real time. Greenville also deployed Proofpoint Enterprise Privacy to ensure that sensitive and personal data is protected. Once any sensitive data is found, Proofpoint’s encryption feature provides policy-based, powerful encryption features that mitigate the security risks associated with regulatory violations, data loss and corporate email compliance policy violations.

“By stopping the thousands of emails from entering the network, our mail servers don’t have to work as hard and we have saved a lot of bandwidth as a result. What’s more, Proofpoint is able to monitor and classify any sensitive information – such as credit card numbers or social security numbers – in an email, so that this information is encrypted and flagged to us and remains protected and in line with regulatory compliance mandates,” Jones added.

According to Jones, the implementation was a simple process, with the Proofpoint web-based appliance installed, configured and running within a couple of hours.

BENEFITS: Eliminating Risks, Boosting Cost and Time Efficiencies

With Proofpoint Enterprise Protection, Jones was able to reduce the amount of emails received from an average of 31 million to 1.6 million emails per month. Virus exposure has dropped 96 percent, lowering the potential risk factor and freeing up IT time and resources to spend on other business priorities.

“With the 15 hours a week saved in not scouring emails for possible security threats, our IT team is now able to fix computers and address other pressing tasks. With Proofpoint, employees have been impressed with the massive reduction in spam, which also frees up their time and gives them a better sense of assurance when accessing their emails.”

While Greenville’s biggest security concern was with spam, Proofpoint Enterprise Protection also ensures that users’ email accounts are safeguarded from other, more advanced and malicious cyberattacks.

“I honestly don’t have time to spend tinkering with products. Proofpoint’s solutions have done just that. It’s been so long that I’ve had to chat to anyone from Proofpoint about the solution – it’s simple to use, frees up our resources and does the job perfectly,” Jones said.

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— **Larry Jones**,
Network Architect and
Lead Technician at
Greenville City School
System

proofpoint[™]

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