

Case Study:

CENTRAL COLLEGE OF COMMERCE

WE PROVIDE QUALITY LIFETIME LEARNING FOR A CHANGING WORLD

Protected by ITS-Feda and Copperfasten

Glasgow's Central College of Commerce wins spam and virus war

Background

Once a small fishing village by a crossing on the river Clyde, Glasgow's history has been shaped by battles, industry and enterprise. In 1300, William Wallace of "Braveheart" fame, accompanied by just 300 men defeated an army of 1000 English knights who had taken possession of its castle. Such was the importance of this historic city that marauders sought to dominate or destroy it.

Today, many of the attacks on the commerce and infrastructure of the City have moved from physical to electronic, although for businesses and organisations the results can be no less disastrous. Large educational establishments are no less susceptible to these electronic attacks, with the potential loss of student records, examination results and corporate data being potentially devastating to thousands of staff and students.

Glasgow's Central College of Commerce is situated to the in the heart of the city, only yards from the Buchanan Galleries and Queen Street Station. The IT team operate over 30 servers all running Novell Netware 6.5 and one MS Windows Server 2003. Together they support over 8000 users.

The challenge

It was against a scenario of increasing spam and virus attacks that the Glasgow Central College of Commerce sought to strengthen its resistance.

Brian Higgins, the College's IT manager, sums up his frustration, "Spam email is the curse of every email administrators' life. We seem to get the blame for every obscene, phishing or viagra email that gets through to our users. Perhaps it is our fault, we should be able to block them at the border, after all, we were hired because of our expertise with email systems. Couple this with the viruses imported on the back of emails and the risk is huge".

Previously, Brian and his team had settled on a well known Novell solution, however, in Brian's words, "Whilst this did a good job of scanning incoming email for viruses we found it a bit lacking in the spam filtering department. It seemed to reject too many legitimate email messages as being spam resulting in a lot of work having to sift through the rejected email and deciding which ones to forward. The spam filters could be tweaked to improve the accuracy of the scans but what we were looking for was a solution that would take away all of the guess work from us".

The solution

ITS-Feda was already known to Brian for its open and unbiased work in the educational sector, and had a proven record of providing cost effective solutions. Brian felt that working with a company experienced in the education sector was very important, recognizing that the educational environment is especially challenging. This was important for a college



having some 2200 full time and 6000 part time students, plus lecturing and support staff.

On behalf of the Educational sector, ITS-Feda had already undertaken an evaluation of a wide range of anti-spam and anti-virus devices, and was able to recognise the challenges immediately. After learning more about Brian's needs, Michael Mena of ITS-Feda was able to recommend a combined hardware and software solution called Copperfasten.



Brian needed convincing. "At first we were skeptical, this sounded too good to be true" he admitted some weeks later, "But Michael offered to have it installed and configured at no cost to us for 30 days with an option to purchase or have it removed at the end of the period. What did we have to lose?"

The outcome can be left to Brian to explain, "After just one week we were filling out a purchase order form. We had seen spam email dropping from many hundreds a day down to just one or two that managed to sneak through. Since the system was installed in June we have had over 150,000 email messages delivered to the college, of these 13,800 contained viruses and were stopped and 53,000 were not delivered as they were deemed to be spam. As a safeguard, users are emailed a daily report on email messages that were destined for them but were not delivered. To date, no-one has contacted us regarding an email that was stopped in error".

"What do we need to do to keep this system up to date and effective? Nothing. Copperfasten daily checks for virus signature and spam filter updates to keep out unwanted email. We now have a lot of happy email users and one very happy email administrator".

Conclusion

ITS-Feda is a leading supplier of network services, tools and consultancy to the Education and Public sector. Part of Thames Valley University, ITS-Feda have partnerships with Novell, Microsoft and others as well as major appliance producers, including Copperfasten.