Northwestern Michigan College

This university uses Micro Focus® Secure Messaging Gateway, a powerful anti-virus (AV) and messaging security agent with a full suite of content filtering, attachment blocking, and anti-spam tools.

Overview

Northwestern Michigan College (NMC) is a community college that provides a quality education environment for more than 4,000 full- and part-time students. In addition, NMC's mission is to provide learning opportunities to the communities it serves, including continuing and non-credit education programs and affiliated programs with Michigan universities.

Challenge

For NMC's mail system administrator, dealing with viruses and spam is a significant job responsibility. Each day brings a flood of junk email, messages with obvious and not-so-obvious viruses attached, and increasingly, messages with large files such as MP3s and other media files attached, presenting system management headaches and consuming system bandwidth and storage capacity. Dan Wasson, NMC Systems

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> **DAN WASSON**
> Coordinator Systems and LAN Management
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and LAN Management Coordinator, has worked with Micro Focus GroupWise® since the product's early days. He remembers when life was simpler for administrators. "Our group supports 550-600 GroupWise mailboxes to meet the collaborative needs of NMC faculty, adjunct faculty, and staff. That's always been the easy part," he quips. "GroupWise just runs; it's the other stuff that's been problematic."

"Our end-user desktops are constantly being exposed to Microsoft-targeted viruses and worms, and the problem continues to grow in complexity and severity," Wasson observes. "We implemented McAfee Virus Scan just before the Code Red/Nimda episodes in 2001, so we've been lucky with virus outbreaks so far. But viruses are always growing more sophisticated, and the number of large files and junk emails kept increasing to the point that we decided to fully address the problem in 2002 with a tightly integrated GroupWise solution from GWAVA (now Secure Messaging Gateway)."

Solution

Secure Messaging Gateway is a powerful anti-virus (AV) and messaging security agent with a full suite of content filtering, attachment blocking, and anti-spam tools. It decrypts and exposes internal and external GroupWise email for standard anti-virus scanning. In addition, Secure Messaging Gateway offers robust email filtering functionality, helping organizations control large

At a Glance

■ **Industry**
Education

■ **Location**
United States

■ **Challenge**
The organization needed to combat viruses and spam.

■ **Solution**
Use Secure Messaging Gateway, which boasts a suite of content filtering, attachment blocking, and anti-spam tools.

■ **Results**
+ Stops specific filenames with attachment blocking
+ Provides security, flexibility, and rapid response capabilities at the center of a GroupWise mail system
+ Opens files to verify file types, and can even stop items such as MP3s that have been renamed as other file types

file transfers and block spam and viruses at the network edge. "The primary reason we chose GWAVA (now Secure Messaging Gateway) was to extend our current anti-virus protection with extension blocking to stop unwanted or virus-infected email from getting to end users in the first place," says Wasson. "Viruses, spam, and large email file attachments are an ongoing problem, even in our GroupWise environment. GWAVA works with our current anti-virus software to meet all our requirements for securing GroupWise mail services for the benefit of Northwestern Michigan College faculty, adjunct faculty, and staff."

Secure Messaging Gateway works with leading NLM-based AV solutions to provide additional protection from viruses. GroupWise stores all email messages in an encrypted database. Since traditional virus scanners are unable to scan encrypted data, they are unable to completely protect the NMC email system. Secure Messaging Gateway helps NMC's McAfee AV software protect GroupWise and the entire network at a deeper level than otherwise possible. Because it identifies and quarantines email messages for scanning, it prevents the spread of viruses at a lower level in the network, such as from post office to post office. For administrators, Secure Messaging Gateway provides security, flexibility, and rapid response capabilities at the center of a GroupWise mail system.

"Basically, GWAVA (now Secure Messaging Gateway) keeps everything bad away from our GroupWise end users and provides much more protection at the network edge," explains Wasson. "For example, GWAVA's attachment blocking options let us stop specific filenames—as well as wild card filenames and types—particularly useful in stopping Visual Basic Scripts (*.VBS). And to keep our users informed when an email is blocked by GWAVA, it sends a notification to the addressed recipient of the blocked message and also creates a log so we can check to see what types of files are being blocked. This high level of protection made it even easier to justify a site license for GWAVA."

"GWAVA's chief technology officer, Charles Taite, was a big help in getting us up and running," notes Wasson. "For example, when we installed GWAVA, we had some problems configuring the software. Uptime on the NMC network is 7 a.m. until 10 at night, and we can't do anything during that time. I called him at 10 o'clock in the evening, and he stayed on the phone with me until the issue was resolved. His high level of commitment to customer satisfaction is typical of my experiences with GWAVA."

Results

"We are very happy with GroupWise, and GWAVA (now Secure Messaging Gateway) makes managing the system easier by keeping us in control of our overall messaging environment," says Wasson. "NMC is currently running GWAVA Standard version 1.5. But we will move to the latest version soon to leverage new features such as Fingerprinting and Anti-Spam Heuristics. Some email users know changing a file extension can sneak the file past our current attachment blocking measures. GWAVA's Fingerprinting feature opens files to verify file types, and can even stop items such as MP3s that have been renamed as other file types."

NMC's email administrator is winning the messaging security battle with GroupWise and Secure Messaging Gateway. Concludes Wasson, "For other administrators who want to lock down their GroupWise systems, reduce administrative headaches, and greatly improve the collaborative experience for their end users, my suggestion would be to evaluate GWAVA."

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