



QBE

The ease and speed at which the MessageLabs Anti-Virus service can be introduced was a major factor in our decision to use the service. Although we operate in more than 40 countries, some of our operations are quite small with limited IT expertise available to implement and maintain a traditional content filtering solution. Even in our Australian operations our resources were stretched and MessageLabs' ease of implementation was a big plus.

Murray Laracy
Group IT Security Manager
QBE

QBE Insurance Group

QBE Insurance Group is one of Australia's largest general insurance and reinsurance Groups with operations in more than 40 countries and employing in excess of 7,000 staff. Despite a proactive and comprehensive network-based anti virus program, the company's Australian operations were an early victim of the BugBear virus. Since introducing MessageLabs Anti-Virus service, the group has been email virus free.

QBE Group is ranked in the top 25 global insurance and reinsurance companies. Its reliance on email as a business tool has grown in line with the market during the past six years.

"There is no doubt that email will continue to grow in importance as a means of business communications," said Group IT Security Manager, Murray Laracy. "Unfortunately, the risks from Internet-borne hostile code and other malicious content are also increasing. As new threats emerge we need to look for new approaches to defend our networks and business communications. When the Bugbear virus hit the group, existing anti-virus measures initially provided no defence and printing was shut down for nearly two days. It took several more days to recover fully. MessageLabs Anti-Virus service was implemented immediately afterwards."

Prior to MessageLabs Anti-Virus service, QBE Group deployed a comprehensive anti-virus suite across desktops, servers and mail gateways. All have been retained and are still deployed within the network. "This was necessary as viruses can enter our network via means other than email. In the event that this should happen, our defence strategy requires that we have the capability to detect and clean such viruses quickly," says Murray.

Beating the virus odds

Overall, QBE employs a defence-in-depth strategy for IT Security and MessageLabs Anti-Virus service provides a potent layer of protection against virus threats. "We recognise the most likely source of a virus infection today is Internet email," Murray says. "Traditional methods of virus protection are failing when faced with virus outbreaks such as Nimda and Bugbear. It takes time for the virus protection vendors to identify the virus and develop solutions. It then takes more time to test and deploy solutions across a large corporate network. In that time you may have already suffered considerable damage and loss of service."

Attachment blockers cause inconvenience

Murray adds: "Content filtering such as attachment blocking can provide a defence against virus outbreaks and inappropriate mail, but in my experience they are a rather blunt instrument in the fight against viruses. Inevitably they block a lot of attachments that present no threat to the organisation and so can cause a lot of inconvenience. Ideally you only want to block attachments that contain a threat and this is what MessageLabs provides. In less than four months MessageLabs Anti-Virus service has intercepted almost 8000 viruses for us."

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"MessageLabs does not remove updating activities. All our existing virus protection mechanisms remain in place. The protection it provides against the outbreak means our support staff can be more productive and able to devote their time to higher value activities."

Like most companies, QBE Group carefully monitors its IT budgets and performs cost-benefit analyses. "The MessageLabs Anti-Virus service is a cost-effective solution when compared with more draconian alternatives such as attachment type blocking," Murray says.

Anti-Spam and Anti-Pornography

"Like many businesses today, we are finding that email can be a hungry user of bandwidth, a significant proportion of which is non business related. Apart from the bandwidth problem there is the storage issue both of which translate into unnecessary business cost. With MessageLabs Anti-Virus service, we have eliminated the first area of waste, which is viruses. We also have the option to implement MessageLabs Anti-Spam and Image Control modules should we see the need."

Proactive and Supportive

"We have found MessageLabs to be very pro-active and supportive in terms of customer service," Murray says. "We also like the ability to log in to ClientNet and view what viruses are being blocked and where they come from. The InSight online reporting system provides very useful data on the performance of the service and gives our management good visibility of the value being provided by MessageLabs. As the IT Security Manager for the group, InSight will also give me the capability to easily view email activity in any of our operations around the globe."

Murray adds that any vulnerable network devices such as laptops infected 'on the road' and then reintroduced to the network are almost always identified by QBE's existing defence systems. "But if they are not, we know that the MessageLabs Anti-Virus service will block any virus-infected emails outbound and identify the device for us."