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Richard Moran
Infrastructure Supervisor
Thiess

Thiess

"The quantity of spam and internal complaints had increased exponentially and our efforts to manage the situation were becoming onerous. We implemented various solutions but found them all too difficult to manage and administer," said Richard Moran, Infrastructure Supervisor, Thiess.

Managing IT security is an increasingly critical issue to all businesses, especially as the virus and spam landscapes continue to evolve and become more sophisticated and prolific. Thiess, one of the largest integrated engineering and services providers in Australasia, is no exception.

The threats and wasted time associated with rapidly increasing levels of unwanted emails, prompted the Brisbane-based company to take proactive security measures to protect the company, its employees and customers. The company turned to IBM to provide a MessageLabs managed email security service to protect its networks from potential security threats.

Established in 1933, Thiess is one of Australasia's leading integrated engineering and services providers, with diverse operations across building, civil engineering, mining, process engineering, oil and gas, environmental and utilities services, telecommunications and facilities operations and maintenance.

The Challenge

Thiess employs over 8,000 employees across Australia and South East Asia, with approximately 3,000 utilising email via the corporate network. Their network was increasingly being hit by a large quantity of viruses, spam and pornographic emails. As a result, the number of the internal complaints to the IT department about the impact of this material was also increasing, not to mention the time and resulting overhead associated with having to visually scan and filter emails before they could be safely opened.

"Not only were unwanted emails becoming a threat and a nuisance, we also recognised the huge amount of time it took employees to sort unwanted materials from regular business email, as well as the strain it was placing on the bandwidth of our corporate network," said Richard Moran, Infrastructure Supervisor, Thiess.

In response, Thiess implemented various security strategies in an effort to resolve the situation and protect the organisation, its employees and customers from email threats and any productivity loss due to time wastage. However, each strategy proved either ineffective or too difficult to manage.

"We wanted a solution that quietly blocks restricted emails to allow people to get on with what they are doing, while alerting the IT department and generating reports on attacks," continued Mr Moran. "We needed a managed email security solution that supports customisation, is easy to use and allows us to generate and deploy policies to various users."

A proactive predictive security service that scans for threats outside of Thiess' corporate network is the most effective way to ensure it is protected before the threats even come anywhere near its corporate network.

The Solution

IBM recommended Thiess implement a managed email security service from business partner MessageLabs to scan all incoming and outgoing emails at the Internet level for viruses, spam and unwanted images prior to them reaching or leaving Thiess' corporate network, without the need for it to implement additional hardware, software or resources.

The whole service is working extremely well for us and we now have peace of mind we are protected at all times. Before we had to devote resources for managing this problem alone. Now, we can use these resources in more valuable roles.

"To combat the increasing number and complexity of evolving threats, simply installing security software at the server and desktop levels is no longer enough as it may only be effective once a threat is known," said Mr Moran. "By that time the damage may already have been done.

"I believe the most effective solution for us is one that eliminates email threats by sitting outside the boundaries of our corporate network and filtering all emails prior to their delivery, acting as a first line of defence."

The Thiess managed email security system consists of a range of MessageLabs managed services – Anti-Virus, Anti-Spam and Image Control – providing a comprehensive barrier against unwanted threats.

In partnering with MessageLabs, IBM has combined world-class patented technology, a robust, secure and resilient architecture and 24x7 support to deliver a complete proactive solution tailored to meet Thiess' requirements.

Updates are performed continually to keep pace with the changing nature of email security threats. By continually adapting and storing the profiles of new threats as they are detected, IBM and MessageLabs are able to offer complete email security and set industry standards throughout the Asia Pacific region.

The IT manager or an individual employee is now able to write their own filter and automatically delete flagged emails when they reach the server or an individual's desktop.

The Benefits

The MessageLabs managed email security service has increased the level of Thiess' corporate security and protected it against bandwidth theft, eliminating the threat and cost of system downtime due to virus infected emails and spam. The service required no investment in additional hardware or software to implement the service.

In addition, the accurate detection of pornography has offered Thiess reduced risk of employee legal action resulting from email pornography in the workplace and unproductive downtime.

Thiess has also been able to increase productivity of its employees by freeing up resources dedicated to managing and administering email network security, as well as the time spent having to sift through emails and deleting unwanted content.

"The whole service is working extremely well for us and we now have peace of mind we are protected at all times," said Mr Moran. "Before we had to devote resources for managing this problem alone. Now, we can use these resources in more valuable roles."

The Future

With the assurance its network, employees and customers are protected at all times from the impact of viruses, spam and unwanted images such as pornography, Thiess can continue on with what it does best – providing integrated engineering and services to its customers.