AFL kicks content filtering goal

Challenge

The AFL's IT resource was experiencing spam mail doubling every two months. There were substantial on-going costs associated with managing and updating anti-virus software while, at the same time, IT team members were spending an exorbitant amount of time putting out virus and spam 'fires'. The AFL were also concerned about the negative impact their spam problem could have on their public image.

Solution

MailGuard's services delivered proactive solutions to meet anti-virus, anti-spam, content filtering and Privacy Act email compliance requirements.

Benefits

· Simple to use, real-time and low cost off-site answer to internal and external email activity ensuring peace of mind to the IT department.
· Fully managed secure email filtering to eradicate unwanted content.
· IT staff freed up to direct their skills to higher value activities.

> " This is an ideal service, offering a simple to use, real-time and low cost solution. "

The Australian Football League (AFL) is Australia's premier spectator sport attracting more than 6 million people yearly. It has the third-highest number of recreational participants and players of any Australian sport and enjoys more than 500,000 club members. Besides the more recognised AFL footballers, thousands are involved in Auskick, school football, club football, veterans' and women's football.

The AFL is the premier sporting competition in Australia commanding high levels of corporate sponsorship and massive media coverage. During each premiership season, 16 clubs play 176 matches and nine finals in different states around Australia. The AFL Grand Final at the MCG attracts capacity crowds of about 95,000 fans each year.

The AFL has a comprehensive, professional administration arm led by Chief Executive Officer, Wayne Jackson. The AFL's IT Manager, Tony Abate, as in many workplaces today, has responsibility for a wide variety of computer and communications related issues with a limited number of resources available to him.

"Being a high profile entity, we were receiving an inordinate number of junk emails in addition to dealing with virus concerns that were growing daily" says Abate. "Since 2002, MailGuard has effectively resolved both virus and spam issues for the AFL. It only took a few minutes to work out that adopting MailGuard to undertake our content filtering needs was going to actually save us money and time in people and bandwidth usage as well as improving our security."

One of the biggest challenges in guarding against debilitating viruses is simply keeping abreast of the latest threats and updating all users' desktops. There are substantial on-going costs associated with managing and updating anti virus software. MailGuard's outsourced solution checks every incoming and outgoing email for an organisation on a 24x7 basis and updates its own software every 10 minutes.

Maintaining a wholesome family image.

"It is reassuring to know that viruses and unwanted mail is intercepted at the ISP level before it gets a chance to enter the AFL's network" said Abate. "What is particularly important to the AFL is the perception the market has of us as an organisation. Some emails and attachments have the potential to conflict with our wholesome family image. Again, MailGuard helps us quarantine these offensive or questionable emails prior to either entering or leaving our organisation." The fact that there are no hardware or software overheads related to the MailGuard service was very attractive to the AFL, who aim to save on costs and streamline administration wherever possible. Abate and his team are very happy with the level of support from MailGuard staff, "even when it comes to issues that aren't actually related directly to MailGuard's offering" says Abate. "It was very simple to set up over the internet and has blocked tens of thousands of junk emails and viruses from coming into our system. And all I have to do is continue paying the monthly invoice" said Abate. "I can access online reports at any time and these provide useful management statistics on network user numbers, email usage, email sizes, internet access and virus stops that have taken place and so on. This is the sort of data that is of enormous assistance for planning purposes."

Fully managed secure email filtering to eradicate unwanted content.

In addition, the AFL has adopted MailGuard's automated solution to meet compliance requirements based on the amendments to the Privacy Act introduced in December 2001. "We need to meet certain privacy requirements for both internal and external email activity" said Abate. The AFL must ensure that all internal users receive and agree to its email privacy policy as well as, on request, providing its users with details of what is logged of their users' email and internet usage. MailGuard undertakes all of this for the AFL.

"This is an ideal service, offering a simple to use, real-time and low cost solution" concludes Abate, "and this is the sort of thing IT managers are looking for so they can focus on the important, business critical matters for their users. It only took a few minutes to work out that adopting MailGuard to undertake our content filtering needs was going to actually save us money and time in people and bandwidth usage as well as improving our security."