

Edmonton Public Schools

K-12 EDUCATION

When staff at Edmonton Public Schools became overwhelmed by unwanted emails, a number of anti-spam solutions were assessed. Sophos PureMessage was picked based on platform coverage, inclusion of technical support in all licenses, and the flexibility of filtering options.



Business challenge

Edmonton Public Schools is one of the largest school districts in Alberta, with over 200 schools and 80,000 students. Committed to achieving superb results from all students, the district works with parents, local businesses and community organizations to drive academic results and high school completion rates.

Edmonton district schools average about 18,000 email messages a day, 33% of which are identified as spam. Incoming email has peaked at twice the normal volume and spam has been known to soar to 71% of the total.

In 2003, the decision was taken to do something about the massive amount of unsolicited emails that the 8000+ teachers, administrators, trustees, custodians and support staff had to contend with on a daily basis. The greatest challenge for Sean Page, Network Analyst for the district, was finding a solution that could match the requirements of a very diverse user base. "It's very difficult to make everyone happy. Spam to one person is not necessarily spam to someone else."

Key facts

Organization

Edmonton Public Schools

Location

Edmonton, Alberta

No of users

8000+

Email traffic

18,000 daily

Servers

FreeBSD

Solution

PureMessage for UNIX

"People can't stop thanking us for Sophos PureMessage."

*Sean Page, Network Analyst,
Edmonton Public Schools*

The various computer users at Edmonton's public schools all require something different from their email and, as a result, a solution was needed that could be set according to the demands of each location.

The key factors that influenced Edmonton's choice of anti-spam solution were compatibility with FreeBSD – Edmonton's platform of choice, the availability of phone and email technical support and the ability to fine tune filtering policies. A number of competing anti-spam solutions were evaluated before Sophos PureMessage was selected.

Technology solution

Installing PureMessage was very easy for the district, according to Page. "After reading the PureMessage documentation, the installation only took about an hour – it was a snap." Since then, more time is spent dealing with users than actually administering the software. Page comments, "The latest versions of PureMessage do not require a lot of administration once they are up and running, though diligent administrators will spend time tweaking, monitoring and reporting." Page continues, "Administration varies greatly based on the particulars of each location's email and spam policies."



Business results

Since installing PureMessage, Edmonton Public Schools has been delighted with the results. System reliability and ease of administration are rated highly, and the amount of spam reaching users has been dramatically reduced.

The whole project has been considered a great success. PureMessage allows system administrators to manage quarantined messages and to establish mail filtering preferences through whitelists and blacklists, and Sophos's highly acclaimed technical support is included in every license at no extra cost.

Since implementing PureMessage, there has been a vast reduction in the amount of spam getting through to users, and feedback has been excellent. Sean Page concludes, "We are thoroughly impressed with the accuracy and dynamic feature set. PureMessage has proven highly flexible and enormously effective in identifying and blocking spam."

To find out how Sophos products can help protect your organization, visit www.sophos.com/products, call toll-free 1-866-866-2802, or email us at nasales@sophos.com.