

Spam is more than an irritation, it costs businesses money. If your ISP's filters are not enough, there are products that can put you back in control. **Ian Parsons** reports

Spam is a real nuisance. It fills up mailboxes and obscures mail you actually want to read. Individuals can do quite a bit to reduce the irritation, and ISPs are also grappling with the problem, filtering spam before it ever reaches the user.

We looked for the ability to

filter email in both directions.

There is growing concern about company mail systems being used for criminal activities or simply as a way of passing on sensitive data. Inbound spam generates the most concern because it wastes the most time and resources, but out-bound mail can be even more

damaging.

We looked for systems that used a combination of techniques to handle spam. These were likely to trap more of it than one offering fewer options, although the effectiveness of the techniques used was more important than the numbers involved.

Mailgate 5550 Appliance



Supplier Tumbleweed Communications
Price \$13,400 for 500 users
Contact www.tumbleweed.com

Tumbleweed's Model 5550 MailGate Appliance is aimed at the enterprise market, offering dual processors, redundant power supplies and four hot-swappable disk drives with two Gigabit Ethernet connections in a 2U chassis.

Installation was straightforward: we simply entered the network addresses for the interfaces via the control panel at the front of the device, and printed installation documentation gave a step-by-step guide to configuring each option using a browser connection to the

management interface.

In practice, the device requires very little administration as most of the anti-spam features are automatic. The admin just needs to decide the level of spam detection to use — blocking spam and junk mail completely, or simply tagging it and passing it through, or allowing end-users to determine how possible spam addressed to them should be treated.

Reporting is similarly limited, but reports can be sent to several addresses and be scheduled for different intervals. The administration interface provides an overview of system status and traffic flow, and the online help system is available on all screens.

It is possible to extend email message processing options by configuring extra policy rules to control messages that have been accepted by the system. This can be used to quarantine all messages sent to a particular user, say, or to notify another user that messages were being received from certain domains or addresses.

If used in conjunction with the option to classify traffic from specified senders as either Bulk or Junk mail, or to always allow or

always block this traffic, it would be possible to further refine traffic processing. Delving into the interface revealed options for encryption settings and recipient validation, and user controls such as account locking and activation, as well as a troubleshooting and diagnostics page.

We found the device was very easy to use, with the complexities completely hidden behind the interface. Although this feels a little strange at first, it soon becomes familiar, and the detailed monitoring screens provide reassurance that the device is really doing its job, with traffic graphs and on-screen reports with enough options to satisfy most requirements.

SC MAGAZINE RATING	
Features	★★★★☆
Ease of use	★★★★☆
Performance	★★★★☆
Documentation	★★★★☆
Support	★★★★☆
Value for money	★★★★☆
OVERALL RATING	★★★★☆
For Simple to use, but with plenty of power.	
Against There is no facility to connect to specialized blacklist servers.	
Verdict Provides a range of powerful anti-spam services behind a deceptively simple interface.	



“Provides a range of powerful anti-spam services behind a deceptively simple interface”

Ian Parsons,
 Reviewing Editor

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