

Dickey Rural Networks

Delivering Reliable Messaging Services

“MIRAPOINT PROVIDES US WITH HIGH AVAILABILITY, TIGHT INTEGRATION WITH OUR MANAGEMENT SYSTEM, AND JUST PEACE OF MIND.”

Brian Johnson, Programmer Analyst, Dickey Rural Networks

CASE STUDY | MSP



BUSINESS NEED

Reliability and simplified management of the email system

SOLUTION

Mirapoint Message Server

BOTTOM LINE

Mirapoint delivers an easy-to-manage, highly reliable messaging solution

Background

Since 1950, Dickey Rural Telephone has been providing telephone service to rural southeastern North Dakota. Today, Dickey Rural Networks or DRN, as it is known to its customers, offers state-of-the-art telecommunications, dial-up and broadband Internet access, television, and email services. More than 6,200 customers throughout its service area currently subscribe to email.

The Business Need

Rather than build and maintain its own infrastructure, DRN had been purchasing email and related backend services, such as authentication, from a wholesale email provider using a Windows-based product called MailSite by Rockliffe. However, escalating service problems spurred DRN to consider bringing all of its email related infrastructure in-house. “Email was the single largest source of customer complaints for us,” says Brian Johnson, programmer analyst and technical expert responsible for email at Dickey Rural Networks. Something had to be done.

The Mirapoint Solution

In March 2005, Johnson began to consider in-house alternatives including open source products such as Sendmail and qmail, as well as a commercial product, Communicate Pro, and the appliance-based Mirapoint solution. The solution to be chosen would need to integrate seamlessly with the back-end authentication and user management systems, which DRN would build around OpenLDAP. With the decision to use OpenLDAP made, Johnson began to evaluate his email options. “We could go with open source software running on IBM i386 servers, building our own spam and anti-virus components and dealing with that headache for six to nine months. Our biggest concern was having the staff to do that. And once you build your own environment with Sendmail or qmail, you are out there on your own when it comes to support.”



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Communicate Pro offered support for its software, but it still ran on a general-purpose i386 server. "If we had a problem, IBM might claim it's a software issue and Communicate might claim it's a hardware issue," laments Johnson. "We didn't want to have to deal with two vendors blaming each other."

The appliance-based approach offered by Mirapoint appealed to Johnson. Positive recommendations from two other rural telephone cooperatives in North Dakota who were Mirapoint customers made it the leading contender. "Based on our initial evaluation of the different solutions, Mirapoint was our preferred choice," recalls Johnson.

Mirapoint provided DRN with a demo appliance. "We started testing it," says Johnson. "Very quickly we realized this was exactly what we needed. It was exactly as advertised. We were so impressed with its capabilities, how it worked and how easy it was to integrate it with LDAP. It was the cat's pajamas."

Johnson was also pleased with the level of support. "During the evaluation and eventual deployment, Mirapoint was very easy to work with, very professional, and able to provide us with quick and successful solutions to any issues we came up with."

The demo system, a Mirapoint M450 Message Server appliance, became the permanent solution. DRN's 60 internal mail users were migrated in late March 2005, and the service provider's 6,200 email customers were moved over a month later.

The Bottom Line

Since deploying the Message Server in March, the appliance has never gone down. "It's been up, it's been solid, and it's worked very well," reports Johnson. Traffic averages 140,000 messages per day. The solution provides POP3, SMTP, IMAP, and Webmail access for internal users plus Outlook-based group calendaring and for SynQ. DRN customers can access their messages using POP3, SMTP, or Webmail. Mirapoint's multi-layered anti-spam and anti-virus technology effectively protects all users from viruses, spam and other email-borne threats.

Managing the system has been easy. Johnson reviews the system log on a daily basis, which takes him roughly two hours each month. Customer complaints have been eliminated, allowing Johnson to concentrate on other issues. "Mirapoint provides us with high availability, tight integration with our management system, and just piece of mind."

About Mirapoint

Mirapoint® is the market leader in appliance-based solutions for secure message networks in enterprise, service provider, and education organizations, with more than 115 million mailboxes served and secured worldwide. Customers use Mirapoint appliances including the Message Server mail appliance and RazorGate mail security appliance to build the messaging infrastructure that intelligently serves, secures and manages email. Mirapoint is headquartered in Sunnyvale, California, with offices throughout North America, Europe and Asia. For more information on Mirapoint, visit its Website at www.mirapoint.com.

Configuration

- Mirapoint M450 mail appliance