

Eschelon Telecom

Offering New Levels of Email Security

“WE WERE TRYING TO DEAL WITH UP TO 7,000 ABUSE EMAILS A MONTH. WITH MIRAPOINT THAT NUMBER HAS DROPPED BY OVER TWO THIRDS, SAVING A LOT OF TIME FOR MY STAFF.”

Steve Kolar, senior director of IP network operations and engineering, Eschelon Telecom, Inc.

CASE STUDY | SERVICE PROVIDER



BUSINESS NEED

Scalable, highly effective security solution for spam and virus protection

SOLUTION

Mirapoint RazorGate 450 appliances

BOTTOM LINE

Easy to manage, highly reliable Mirapoint RazorGate appliances have reduced staff time dedicated to managing virus and spam-related issues while generating new, subscription-based revenue streams

Background

Eschelon Telecom, Inc., (www.eschelon.com), founded in 1996, is a provider of integrated communications services, headquartered in Minneapolis, Minnesota, offering small and medium sized businesses a comprehensive line of telecommunications and Internet products including local phone lines, long distance, business telephone systems, DSL, dedicated T1 access, network solutions, Web hosting, and hosted email services. The company serves over 56,000 business users in eight states including Minnesota, Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, and Colorado.

The Business Need

Since its founding, Eschelon Telecom has provided POP, IMAP, and Webmail services using Critical Path software running on Sun servers. Within the past two years, as the volume of spam and viruses grew dramatically, the company became concerned with the amount of time technical staff was dedicating to dealing with the problem. “Customers’ servers were being black-listed due to viruses spawning junk mail and users were complaining about the huge volume of spam they were receiving,” says Steve Kolar, senior director of IP network operations and engineering at Eschelon. “We needed an effective virus scanning solution. In addition, our marketing department needed a spam solution that they could sell.”



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The Mirapoint Solution

Kolar began his search for a solution in late 2004. “We decided we wanted an in-house appliance type of solution that would create very little overhead or require no additional personnel to manage.” Among the alternatives that Kolar considered were Brightmail, Postini, Symantec, and Mirapoint.

Brightmail did integrate with Critical Path, but it was far too costly. Postini, as an outsourced solution, required Eschelon to give up control. “We would have to rely on their network uptime, and then there were the issues of back-up and restore, and if mail started getting dropped or wasn’t delivered it would be harder for my team to troubleshoot,” says Kolar.

Kolar also investigated Symantec anti-virus software, which would have required a dedicated server. But to also provide spam filtering functionality would have required separate licenses and yet another server. “It became a management issue,” says Kolar. “We would have to manage the servers and patches and ongoing maintenance.”

After completing the review process, Eschelon chose Mirapoint’s RazorGate appliance-based solution. “Some of the others claimed they were appliance-based solutions, which really amounted to ‘here’s the software, you go get the server,’” recalls Kolar.

Mirapoint’s RazorGate appliance offered proven scalability and reliability, consistent high catch rates for spam and viruses, and unique MailHurdle™ edge-blocking and Rapid anti-spam real-time protection technologies. One of the key features Eschelon particularly liked was Mirapoint’s Junk Mail Manager, which allows per-user control for spam management. Junk Mail Manager could help Eschelon differentiate its email security offerings and thereby generate additional revenue.

In March 2005, Eschelon deployed its first RazorGate appliance at its headquarters location in Minneapolis. The phased deployment started with the scanning of outgoing messages; once they were comfortable that performance would not be an issue, Kolar’s team began scanning incoming messages on a domain-by-domain basis. Eventually, three RazorGate 450 appliances were deployed in Minneapolis: two as “active” with one cold standby. To serve its West Coast users, Eschelon deployed two RazorGate 450 appliances in Seattle: one primary and one cold standby.

The Bottom Line

Mirapoint has enabled Eschelon to achieve the goal of reducing staff time dedicated to managing virus and spam-related issues. “We were trying to deal with up to 7,000 abuse emails a month,” says Kolar. “With Mirapoint that number has dropped by over two thirds, saving a lot of time for my staff.”

The RazorGate appliances have proven to be easy to manage and highly reliable. “Since we’ve deployed them they have never crashed, never died,” says Kolar.

Nearly 25,000 POP accounts in Minneapolis and 35,000 in Seattle are protected from viruses by the RazorGate appliances. Over 1,500 Eschelon customers have subscribed to Junk Mail Manager, which the company has rebranded SpamWare, helping Eschelon differentiate its email security offerings and generate additional revenue streams based on this new, value-added service capability.

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 RazorGate 450 security appliances