

Garvan Institute of Medical Research

"HAVING AN INTEGRATED MESSAGING SOLUTION THAT WORKS EFFICIENTLY AND RELIABLY MEANS WE CAN GET BACK TO OUR CORE BUSINESS, WHICH IS RESEARCH AND DISCOVERY."

Jim McBride, Information Technology Manager, Garvan Institute

CASE STUDY | EDUCATION



BUSINESS NEED

Integrated, flexible messaging solution free of spam and viruses

SOLUTION

Mirapoint Message Server™

BOTTOM LINE

Mirapoint delivers a feature-rich, fully integrated, easy-to-manage, and cost-effective messaging solution

Background

The Garvan Institute of Medical Research was founded over 40 years ago by the Sisters of Charity as a small research department of St. Vincent's Hospital in Sydney. Since then, it has grown to become one of Australia's largest medical research institutions with over 400 scientists, students, and support staff. With the numerous co-located research groups sharing the Garvan research building, a user community of over 500 is supported by the Information Technology Group. Garvan enjoys major collaborative programs with national and international institutions and places emphasis on clinical links with hospitals and interactions within the industry. The need to communicate and collaborate with researchers around the world makes email a critical part of the Institute's operation.

The Business Need

The Garvan Institute had been using a patchwork quilt of products to support email and attempt to control spam and viruses. Open source Sendmail running on a small Sun Microsystems Solaris server provided the bulk of email services, while another open-source application, SquirrelMail, provided Webmail access for users without an email client. Separate anti-spam and anti-virus products attempted to mitigate the flood of junk mail and malware-but with limited success.

Even though 50,000 or more spam and virus-laden messages were blocked each month, 50 percent of the messages delivered to Garvan's 500 users contained spam because the Institute, concerned about false positives, tagged them as spam and passed them along for users to assess. One IT staff member was spending nearly half his time keeping spam and virus protection current. Pushed to its limit, the email server would occasionally become unavailable to users for periods of time as it tried to analyze hundreds of megabytes of files for viruses and spam.

To provide users with calendaring capabilities, the Institute supported a separate system, MeetingMaker. One group within the Institute eventually installed their own Microsoft Exchange system because they felt they couldn't operate efficiently without an integrated messaging, calendaring, and contact solution.



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The Mirapoint Solution

By the beginning of 2006, the Institute knew it had to do something. Just replacing the existing general-purpose server with a larger one was not the answer. The ideal solution would offer an automated process for keeping spam and virus detection up to date. It would provide a fully integrated solution for messaging, calendaring, and contact information. It would easily support both PC and Macintosh platforms. And all of this would be supported by a single vendor. Finally, it would support the Institute's mobile communications strategy for remote messaging and synchronization of calendars and contacts on mobile phones.

The Institute first evaluated Microsoft Exchange, determining what it would take to implement, the level of ongoing support needed, and overall cost. "The overhead and the cost structure of the licensing were not going to be sustainable for Galvan," says Jim McBride, Garvan's Information Technology Manager. "They were off the scale."

Then Seccom Networks, a local Mirapoint reseller, introduced the Garvan Institute to the Mirapoint solution. After a rigorous two-month trial, the research data was clear. "When we compared it to our list of requirements—strong anti-spam/anti-virus protection; rich, fully integrated features; PC and Mac support; single vendor; and mobility capabilities—Mirapoint ticked all of the boxes and the pricing was well within what we thought was a reasonable range," says McBride.

The Garvan Institute installed a Mirapoint M500 Message Server appliance in October 2006, migrating all users over a weekend. Careful planning ensured a smooth cutover. McBride and his team installed the Message Server themselves—with the skilled assistance of Mirapoint. "The Mirapoint technical people have been outstanding," remarks McBride. "They know their stuff. They look at what we are trying to do and they say no worries, we can do that with Mirapoint."

Garvan will be implementing the Nokia Intellisync Mobile Suite (IMS) for Mirapoint solution very soon. Nokia IMS enables mobile workers to access collaboration applications such as messaging, calendaring, and contacts from any device, whether laptop, PDA, or smart phone. Garvan has already migrated to a provider offering 3G mobile services. With the deployment of Nokia IMS, Garvan will also deploy Mirapoint calendaring to all users and migrate from the standalone MeetingMaker application. Finally, the small Exchange messaging server will be retired and those users brought into the Mirapoint solution.

The Bottom Line

The most dramatic change since the Mirapoint solution was implemented is the near elimination of spam and viruses. The Mirapoint system intercepts over 300,000 messages containing spam and viruses each month. "Users were patting us on the back for weeks after the system went live," says McBride. "It had an immediate positive impact on reducing the rubbish going into mailboxes and increasing the productivity of our users."

Mirapoint has also enabled flexibility to meet a wide range of user needs. "In a research environment we encourage people to be diverse and think differently," says McBride. "Constraining the list of tools people use is not the business we're in. Mirapoint allows our users to pick the operating system they want, PC or Mac, as well as the mail client they want, including Eudora, Outlook, and Mac mail client, or Webmail."

The Mirapoint solution has made McBride's job a lot easier. The single, purpose-built appliance delivers a full complement of integrated features—from messaging, calendaring, and address books to anti-spam/anti-virus and mobility—all from a single vendor. "We have well over 500 users, yet we can manage the Mirapoint solution with a fraction of a staff member," says McBride. Add to that ease of management—the system has had zero downtime since it was installed.

Cost is rarely a non-issue for organizations, whether they are for-profit or non-profit, like the Garvan Institute. "Research organizations are not typically well funded," says McBride. "We need to spend our money carefully. We've done that with Mirapoint."

The bottom line is what Mirapoint has done for the Garvan Institute. "Having an integrated messaging solution that works efficiently and reliably means we can get back to our core business, which is research and discovery," says McBride.

About Mirapoint

Founded in 1997, 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 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 Web site at www.mirapoint.com.

Configuration

- Mirapoint Message Server M500 appliance



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