

The Mailboxes of the SPP Company are protected by Soitron



Company

Slovenský plynárenský priemysel, a.s.

Line of business

Natural gas and electricity supply

Number of employees

985 (stated on December 31, 2012)

Requirements

- * To prevent the unwanted and potentially dangerous overflow of corporate mailboxes due to spam.
- * To reduce the costs incurred when spam causes transfer capacities and disk spaces to overload.
- * To increase the protection of the corporate computer network and corporate data by eliminating the security risks from spam in the form of fraudulent emails or containing malicious software.

Solution

- * Design assessment of the entire corporate network.
- * Deployment of Cisco IronPort, a high-performance, combined hardware/software solution, accessible and scalable to fit future business needs..

Results

- * Reduction in the workload of the IT department. Thanks to the quarantine, the IT professionals do not have to deal with queries from users who cannot find expected

e-mails, and they are not burdened with operating IronPort, which is largely autonomous.

- * Reduction in the load on the entire IT infrastructure as it is not overloaded with spam.
- * Reduction in security risks, mainly the risks of malicious software penetrating the corporate network and of corporate data leakage.

Employees of the company Slovenský plynárenský priemysel, a.s. (SPP) receive and send more than 200,000 emails per month. Since unwanted emails (spam) account for more than three quarters of global email traffic, it is understandable that the company is trying to protect email servers and already overfull employee mailboxes from unwanted and potentially dangerous messages, especially when the cost of spam is enormous. These costs include a decrease in employee productivity as well as an increase in the cost of needed transfer capacity or storage space. According to the Journal of Economic Perspectives, spam imposes costs of almost \$20 billion annually on global business.

Initial state

The managers of SPP are aware of the high costs and risks of spam, and they have tried hard to eliminate it. As spammers became more and more sophisticated and the anti-spam solution used by the company became unsatisfactory and did not even have the appropriate level of support, the decision to choose a new solution was simple and straightforward.

The main requirement was to protect more than five thousand corporate mailboxes from spam and malware with a high-performance, highly available and scalable system that not only could handle current technological threats, but would also be prepared for future ones. SPP opted for Cisco IronPort, a combined hardware/software solution implemented by Soitron. The main reason for choosing this anti-



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Product Manager at Soitron

spam system was that the system uses constantly updated reputation databases that have been in the cloud for several years. When an email arrives, the system checks these databases to determine the reputation of the server attempting to communicate and accordingly decides how to classify the email. What also convinced SPP's power engineers were the facts that the solution is used by many companies in Slovakia and last but not least that the supplier Soitron uses it in its own production environment. „We were able to present detailed insights about the operation, including various statistics, even during the tender process,“ says Juraj Audi, Project Manager at Soitron.

New solution

Besides IronPort's reputation databases and its local references, SPP showed interest in these additional key features of IronPort:

- * It includes a wide range of different security modules such as monitoring the leakage of sensitive company information or encrypting email communication. Although SPP has not purchased licenses for all of them, there is always the option to unlock any functionality at any time in the future. For example, if the company SPP decides to send electronic invoices to clients, they can easily be encrypted using IronPort.
- * It is an outstanding, high-performance device. IronPort is not just software - it is a device that can handle a large amount of emails in a few seconds. That is important for a company the size of SPP. Moreover, thanks to its robustness, it can repulse controlled attacks which can put the entire mail server out of operation.
- * It is easy and fast to deploy. „Once, a customer informed us that his mail servers were completely overloaded and spamming each other,” says Maroš Rajnoch, Product Manager at Soitron. „On that same day we installed IronPort for him. The problem was immediately resolved, though later on we further configured the system and adapted it to the customer’s requirements.” Such an urgent intervention was not necessary at SPP as the company already had anti-spam protection. However, it was an advantage that IronPort could be deployed by Soitron without the need to interrupt the operation of the previous anti-spam solution.
- * Its operation is problem-free. „IronPort is highly effective even without a detailed configuration and setup,” remarks Mr. Rajnoch. Thanks to the demand for constantly updated reputation databases in the cloud, the entire solution is largely autonomous and does not require too much attention and maintenance. „An ideal security system is one the customer is not aware of,” adds Mr. Rajnoch. For the success of the project, the analytical part was particularly important for specifying the whole design of the network and proposing the best way to implement IronPort. “For optimal deployment, it is necessary to consider the existing design of the entire corporate network and the specific requirements of the company, such as its plans for future expansion,” says Mr. Audi, explaining why the choice of an experienced supplier is important.

Results

Today, when employees of SPP return from vacation, they do not have to worry about their mailboxes being overloaded with hundreds or thousands of unwanted messages. If the system is not sure whether

incoming mail is spam or not, or if the mail meets any of the pre-defined criteria (for example, it contains an encrypted part) it is shifted to quarantine. The employees have access to it, so if they do not receive an expected email, they do not have to send a request to the IT department and wait to receive information about whether the system blocked the concerned email. „For five thousand users, the IT department would not be able to handle such issues in terms of time,” remarks Mr. Rajnoch. As IronPort is largely autonomous, the IT department does not have to be concerned too much about its operation and maintenance. The benefit of IronPort is not only in reducing the load of the IT department but also of the entire corporate IT infrastructure. Spam overloads communication lines and disk space. Moreover, it is often a bearer of malware, malicious software that disrupts computer operations as it tries to obtain sensitive information or access to the information system. „Sometimes spam does not contain malware directly, but the email message may include a link to a website where malware is to be found,” adds Mr. Rajnoch. Not only does IronPort increase the safety of the internal network by protecting it from harmful code, but it also prevents the leakage of sensitive company information. The system contains the DLP (Data Loss Protection) module which can do an in-depth email content inspection. In other words, it monitors email communication and searches for words, numbers, or other predefined strings of characters and numbers which could indicate sensitive data. Then it is up to the established policy whether such a message is encrypted before leaving the company or whether an authorized employee receives a notification.

Used technologies

CISCO IronPort Email Security Appliance – ESA

- * AntiSpam security policy
- * Reputation database SensorBase and SDN v.3
- * Sophos AntiVirus security policy
- * Content Filter
- * Virus Outbreak

CISCO IronPort Security Management Appliance – SMA

- * Quarantine
- * Reporting

Slovenský plynárenský priemysel, a.s.

SPP is a multinational energy company with a key position among gas market players in Europe. The company is continuing the over 155 years of gas industry tradition in Slovakia. Its main focus is on supplying two commodities - natural gas and electricity. SPP is a leader on the natural gas supply market and a proven and reliable partner for almost 1,3 mil. Slovak households and for many commercial clients, including leading companies of the Slovak economy.

Soitron

Our company has long been active in the European market as a systems integrator in the areas of IT Infrastructure, Unified Communications, Customer Interaction, Content Management and Security. For more than 20 years, we have been helping companies such as Tatra banka, Slovenská sporiteľňa, Orange, E-On, J&T, Hewlett Packard and many others to grow their business. Our philosophy is to continue moving forward; that makes us the leader in implementing unique technologies and innovative solutions. This is reflected in awards like IT Company of the Year 2010 and Cisco Best Partner of the Year 2012, and inclusion among the Big Five in the Deloitte Technology Fast 50 (2011). We are Microsoft Gold Partner and we have implemented several important projects in the commercial and public sector. Currently we have more than 600 international experts working for us, including professional teams in the Czech Republic, Romania and Turkey.

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