

Mintel International Group Selects Trustco Plc to Block Spam

The Client – Intel International Group

Mintel International Group has been in the business of supplying market research for more than thirty years. Their research, provided through reports and on-line, continuously updated databases, is used by companies globally. The unique insight and intelligence has a direct impact on their clients' success.

The company delivers analysis of diverse areas that include leisure, consumer goods, retail, financial services, sales promotion and social trends. Offices in several locations world-wide support their global customer base.

According to Jason Thomson, Mintel's IT Director, "IT is one of our core competencies. We use it to differentiate ourselves from our competitors". He explains that "Many of our systems are developed internally, using open source utilities where it makes sense".

The Challenge

Mintel's management and staff were seeing growing amounts of spam in their email inboxes. In addition to individuals, it was particularly affecting "role" email addresses. Around twenty email aliases, such as "info@mintel.com" are used by the company, sending copies of in-coming messages to multiple people. These aliases are heavily hit by spam since they are easily harvested from the company's website. This large volume of spam is then sent internally to many people.

Spam was also affecting the productivity of the sales force, who had recently been provided with BlackBerry devices. Managing fifty junk messages per day was becoming an increasingly distracting problem.

Mintel's anti-spam approach relied on open source utilities such as SpamAssassin and the use of so-called real-time blacklists. Though Thomson estimates that this approach was blocking around ninety percent of junk emails, the ever increasing volume of spam, combined with the limited administration resource he could afford to assign to the problem, meant that significant amounts of time was wasted managing spam throughout the company.

The existing solution had a number of deficiencies and frustrations that lead Thomson and his team to look into a better approach. These problems included:

- Staff had to call the IT department when they could not find an email they were expecting to receive, causing delays and the use of administrators' time
- A blanket ban on all attachments being delivered via email to staff from external sources, making Mintel harder to do business with
- There was no centralised administration – any change to improve spam capture rates would need to be repeated for each of the four email gateways
- Multiple user repositories – one for each gateway – meant that new staff, leaving staff and other user database changes had to be done multiple times

"We're very pleased with the service from both Trustco and Postini... It just stops spam!"

The Client

Mintel International Group

- Market research provider
- Based in London
- 400 staff
- Global reach
- IT core to the business

The Challenge

- Growing tide of spam
- In-house solution increasingly ineffective

The Requirement

- Effective spam blocking
- Increase productivity
- Lower TCO

The Solution

Trustco Plc delivered

- Postini's Integrated Message Management solution
- Managed service



MINTEL

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The Decision

A new approach to spam blocking had been in mind for some time. A visit to the Info-Security exhibition prompted a renewed focus on considering a new direction. The solution that stood out was Postini's Integrated Message Management.

Trustco Plc, a Postini Gold Partner, impressed Thomson. "Trustco knew the solution well and were willing to spend the time meeting with us to ensure we had all the facts to make a decision".

Thomson assessed other solutions but found them not to be cost effective. He also considered a further in-house project but soon saw that the overall cost of this approach was huge when compared with outsourcing the problem. Thomson comments that "Though the direct costs of an in-house anti-spam system are less, the indirect costs are much greater – and we would be doing an inferior job". He estimates that, in this case, "If each person has to spend even just five minutes per day managing spam, that equates to 5 wasting people's salary".

The Solution

Mintel chose Trustco to provide Postini's Integrated Message Management solution – a managed service that delivers a clean stream of email. Thomson was convinced that Postini was a good choice from early on. Postini's overall technology architecture is very impressive, while the solution is cost effective.

Four particular aspects of the technology were seen as critical:

- **Excellent spam blocking.**
- **Centralised administration.** Administrators can now manage the whole system from one web-based console. The approach has greatly simplified Mintel's email architecture, so that troubleshooting email problems is now much quicker and simpler.
- **Integration with user database.** The solution integrates directly with Mintel's single user database. This means that Postini is automatically updated for all email gateways from the user database without any additional administrative effort.
- **Immediate administrative changes.** When a change in email policy is made in the console, the change is executed immediately with only one step.

In addition to the very visible reduction in spam delivered across the company – down to virtually zero, system administrators now spend much less time managing the system. Email attachments are now allowed into the company as well, making it easier for clients and partners to do business with the company. This was an easy win for the new solution.

The Future

Mintel are looking at implementing other capabilities of the solution. Processing outbound email is one area – adding disclaimer footers, and filtering messages to identify and potentially block outgoing confidential information.

Postini's geographic routing capability was also seen as important. The intention is to have the system automatically route email messages to the email server in the correct country, saving email gateways from unnecessarily processing these messages.

Overall, Thomson is confident that they made the right choice. "We're very pleased with the service from both Trustco and Postini".

He sums up with "It just stops spam!"



The Benefits

- Company easier to do business with online
- Staff more productive
- Personnel not subjected to unwanted, offensive messages
- More efficient administration
- Email servers now coping easily with message load

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Jason Thomson, IT Director

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Trustco Plc is a UK based IT solutions provider with a focus on enterprise security services, servers, storage & communication solutions from the very best Tier 1 technology vendors. Our experience in servicing the Corporate, Mid-Tier and ISP markets over the past 8 years combined with our four unique value propositions has made Trustco a success in this competitive market space. We offer Educated Choice, Control & Visibility, Our Staff & Culture and Value.

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