

Mount Pleasant Independent School District

K-12 EDUCATION

Mount Pleasant Independent School District in Texas includes nine campuses and teaches over 5,000 students. With over 20,000 email messages being sent to the District each day, 35% of which are spam, reliable and cost-effective protection at the gateway is vital. The District selected the Sophos Email Security Appliance for its ease of use, simple deployment, and reliable protection from email-borne security threats.



Business challenge

Mount Pleasant Independent School District (MPISD) is one of the largest of the four school districts in Titus County, north-east Texas. Consisting of nine campuses, MPISD teaches over 5,000 students in the K-12 age range, from Head Start and Pre-K programs through to Mount Pleasant High School.

MPISD has more than 750 Windows computers to protect. Its existing security strategy was based on a multi-vendor approach, with McAfee used at the endpoint and gateway, Ironport (which uses the Sophos virus detection engine) to guard against email-borne threats, and an intrusion prevention system from TippingPoint Technologies.

Limited resources and time pressures meant systems administrator Noe Arzate could spare little time for monitoring email, and this was compounded by the lack of integration between the different vendors' solutions. Having previously experienced the high standard of protection provided by Sophos, the District decided to install both Sophos Endpoint Security and the Sophos ES4000 Email Security Appliance.

The combined solution provides integrated threat management and simple administration, and complements the existing intrusion prevention system with no problems.

Key facts

Organization

Mount Pleasant Independent School District

Location

Titus County, Texas

Number of users

5,000+ students over 7 schools

Platforms

Windows 2000/XP

Email traffic

20,000 messages per day

Solutions

Sophos ES4000 Email Security Appliance
Sophos Endpoint Security

"I have not seen anything this simple in a long time. It took longer to get the appliance out of the box than to get it up and running."

Noe Arzate, Systems Administrator, Mount Pleasant Independent School District

Technology solution

One of the chief attractions of both the ES4000 Email Security Appliance and Sophos Endpoint Security is the ease with which they can be deployed and managed.

The simplicity of management of the ES4000 is made possible through an intelligently designed web-based management console, which reduces administrative effort and allows more effective and strategic management of the email gateway. It is the system dashboard, with its display of actionable information in a single, easy-to-use window, which especially appealed to systems administrator Noe Arzate, who says, "With a few simple clicks I can see exactly what's happening with our email – I have not seen anything this simple in a long time."

The District was also impressed with the reliability and system maintenance arrangements. The ES4000 communicates with Sophos every five minutes, sending a "heartbeat" that reports on protection status. The appliance receives anti-virus and anti-spam updates automatically, and customers can also initiate remote assistance from Sophos via a secure connection.

Commenting on the decision to install the appliance, Noe Arzate says, "I was already confident with the technology and the virus engine from Sophos. The three-clicks-to-anywhere interface and the heartbeat monitoring made the ES4000 an even more attractive solution. In my case, I have other functions here, so saving time managing email is a great benefit."

Simplicity of management was also a major factor in choosing to safeguard the District's desktops with Sophos Endpoint Security. As well as protecting computers from viruses and spyware, Sophos Endpoint Security detects adware and other potentially unwanted applications, and includes a client firewall to prevent intrusion and stop unauthorized application



communication. All functions can be centrally managed from Sophos Enterprise Console, a management tool which allows single-point deployment, updating, configuration, monitoring, and management of both Sophos Anti-Virus and Sophos Client Firewall network-wide.

The District rated its interaction with Sophos highly, both from the sales and technical points of view. According to Noe Arzate, "Our sales rep was ready to help, and very understanding – it was outstanding service. I can say the same for technical support – I never waited longer than a minute to talk to someone. Sophos understands what teamwork means. You don't get second chances with security, and they knew we had to get this right first time."

Business results

For MPISD, the decision to adopt the ES4000 has meant significant time savings. The management and administration of gateway security has been made far simpler, and no longer having to monitor email leaves the system administrator free to concentrate on other tasks. As Noe Arzate confirms, "It only takes one minute to look at the ES4000 dashboard to know what's happening – on other solutions, it was more like an hour."

These benefits are added to the high standard of protection provided by the appliance against spam, inappropriate content, and email-borne threats. MPISD's desktops receive the same high level of protection from viruses, spyware, Trojans, worms, and potentially unwanted applications through Sophos Anti-Virus, while the Sophos Client Firewall ensures protection against hackers and fast-moving threats across the network.

Noe Arzate says he would recommend Sophos to his peers for a number of reasons. "First of all, Sophos has proven to be one of the leaders in the anti-virus industry. The ES4000 has a great interface, but it also gets the job done, which is what matters most. You only get one chance to stop email-borne viruses infecting your network, and the ES4000 takes care of it for you."

To find out how Sophos products can help protect your organization, visit www.sophos.com/products, call toll-free 1-866-866-2802, or email us at na-sales@sophos.com.