



Southwest Airlines

Customer profile

United States' largest domestic carrier of scheduled domestic departures

Industry

Transportation

IT environment

31,000 employees system-wide; email communications both internally and outbound to customers

Challenges

Protect enterprise email from inbound threats such as spam, viruses and intrusions; monitor outbound email usage; maintain business-critical email flow during mass mail server transition

McAfee solution

McAfee Email Gateway (formerly IronMail)

Results

- 75 – 90% of all email identified as spam
- Successful migration of more than 31,000 email users onto new mail server platform without lost connectivity or messages
- ROI savings of \$300,000 per year in employee productivity
- Set rules for outbound mail to monitor and learn from employee usage
- Increased mail capacity on servers because of dropped spam messages and employee mail routing
- Decreases workload of IT administrators

Southwest Airlines Flies into Email Security with McAfee Email Gateway

Southwest Airline Co. (Southwest) is the nation's largest domestic carrier in terms of scheduled domestic departures, currently serving 62 destinations in 31 states. Southwest began service June 18, 1971 with flights to Houston, Dallas, and San Antonio. Based in Dallas, Texas, the company currently operates more than 3,000 flights and has 31,000 employees system wide.

Relying on email as an essential internal and external communication tool

As one of the United States' leading airlines, Southwest relies on email to communicate essential information to both employees and customers. Therefore it is important that employees' productivity is not hindered by a slowed or damaged network due to spam, viruses or intrusions. In addition to enhancing its email security needs, Southwest decided to streamline its email operating systems, moving from two different platforms to one operating system. This decision was made in order to reduce vendor costs and ease IT administration workflow. Transitioning the email of more than 31,000 employees would be a difficult and time consuming task, and it was imperative that there was no disruption in email flow during the migration.

Extending McAfee Email Gateway beyond spam duty

Southwest had initially purchased McAfee Email Gateway (formerly IronMail) from McAfee's Network Security Business Unit (formerly Secure Computing). "Initially we purchased McAfee Email Gateway to solve our spam problem. It was beneficial because we could ensure that upgrades were included in the pricing and were not a separate package," says Vasu Salem, systems engineer at Southwest. "We also have a tendency to play with our machines and see what else they can do. So, when we decided to migrate our mail servers onto one platform, we thought that McAfee Email Gateway would be able to help with that project. It was highly critical that no emails were lost or delayed during the migration. Our end users did not need to know what system they were on, and ensuring constant email flow would help that. Email Gateway's mail monitoring rule was exactly what we needed to help continue flow during our migration process."

Smooth sailing through email migration

After implementing McAfee Email Gateway for inbound protection and outbound rule setting purposes, Southwest found that anywhere from 75 to 90 percent of its inbound email traffic was spam (depending on the day of the week). As employees dealt with less spam, productivity began to improve drastically. Salem has calculated that because of McAfee Email Gateway, Southwest saves approximately \$300,000 per year in employee productivity due to the decrease in spam and other thwarting intrusions in the email network.

Additionally, Southwest has been able to utilize McAfee Email Gateway's outbound rules and policies to learn how users are sending email. For example, the company can monitor whether employees are having email forwarded to their personal Yahoo or Hotmail accounts. This monitoring allows Southwest email administrators to conserve resources and manage mail capacity based on whether or not an employee utilizes the internal email system, which requires administrators to allocate space or resources on the server.

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Vasu Salem
Systems Engineer
Southwest Airlines

When the server migrations began, Southwest found that one of the issues was the co-existence design. Mail administrators had to make sure that users on all of the platforms could continue to communicate with the same email address, be able to look up one another in address books, and ensure that email was routed to them correctly no matter which system they were on. Southwest planned to migrate between 300 and 1,000 users daily by implementing McAfee Email Gateway's mail monitoring rule to create large lists based on the migration schedule. For example, if they were migrating 100 users, they would put those 100 addresses on the list and set rules so that any email coming through to someone on the list would be re-directed to where it needed to go. Southwest found that when the rule was enabled, McAfee Email Gateway easily rerouted the desired traffic, therefore allowing users to send and receive email as normal.

"At first we were concerned about putting so many mail groups on our Email Gateway. But as we went forward with the migration, we found that our concerns were baseless—McAfee Email Gateway didn't even blink," says Salem. "It was wonderful—it did not go down and did not have a huge queue length. Every email was delivered within a minute. We finished the project successfully, and we could not have done it without McAfee Email Gateway."

