![sunflower BROADBAND]

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>
> *– Frank Wiles, IT Manager, Sunflower*

OVERVIEW

Customer
Sunflower Broadband

Industry
Broadband Communications

Business Challenge
- Current messaging anti abuse system was processing-intensive and difficult to keep running
- Traffic spikes were taxing on administrators

Cloudmark Solution
- Traffic Control with Cloudmark Authority™

Benefits
- Reduction in number of resources required to run message filtering
- Decrease in spam, phishing, and viruses impacting subscriber inboxes
- Increased filtering accuracy
- Better predictability in resource planning
- Increased competitive advantage and customer satisfaction

PROFILE
Sunflower Broadband serves nearly 80% of all homes in the Lawrence, Eudora, and Douglas County areas of Kansas. A triple-play broadband communications company, Sunflower delivers over 200 television channels, high-speed cable modem Internet access, and local and long distance telephone services to their customers.

BUSINESS CHALLENGES
As the IT Manager for Sunflower, Frank Wiles' chief task was to ensure reliable and secure email services for subscribers. With 20,000 email accounts to manage and protect, and the volume of spam on the rise, Sunflower needed a highly scalable and accurate solution for controlling messaging abuse. Sunflower servers were processing 1.5 million emails a day, of which fewer than a third were legitimate.

Wiles was having trouble keeping his first generation rules-based spam filter running continuously due to its high resource demands. "Our previous content filtering solution did a good job of blocking nuisance emails," said Wiles. "But we were having problems keeping the system up and running because it was so CPU-intensive. Every message that came in had to be run through a growing number of filter rules, so you can imagine what that was doing to our CPU load."

In addition, traffic spikes caused by denial of service attacks—which would invariably occur after midnight—were setting off system administrator pagers. "Our automatic monitors were dutifully letting us know that the system was under pressure from attack, but getting up at 3:00 a.m. to look into the problem was causing staff members some grief," said Wiles.

THE CLOUDMARK SOLUTION
Sunflower chose to install MailChannels' Traffic Control solution in front of their MTA servers, and Cloudmark Authority™ was then installed as a replacement for their rules-based spam filter to provide end-to-end protection against spam, phishing and viruses. Traffic Control regulates the flow of suspicious email traffic by performing throttling and traffic shaping at the edge of the network by looking at envelope characteristics and protocol adherence. Cloudmark utilizes a unique combination of Advanced Message Fingerprinting™, and corroborated reporting from the Global Threat Network™, the industry's most sophisticated threat detection system, to rapidly detect messaging abuse with over 98% accuracy and near zero false positives.

RESULTS
- **Infrastructure savings.** Traffic Control with Cloudmark Authority frees network resources, lowers CPU and storage requirements and delivers an immediate improvement in filtering performance. Since deploying the joint solution, Wiles has observed instances when they have handled over 500 concurrent sessions. Sunflower used to have a separate Xeon server for spam processing but, "Traffic Control reduced the flow of email, and

Cloudmark Authority eliminated the spam, so much so that I could redeploy the Xeon for other tasks," said Wiles.

Prior to installing Traffic Control and Authority, Wiles was planning to purchase two or three new servers, which would have cost the company between $5,000 and $10,000. Wiles believes he will be able to run his current configuration longer than before without hardware upgrades.

- **Increased filtering accuracy.** Cloudmark Authority filters out abusive email with greater than 98% accuracy and near-zero false positives. Continual report corroboration and system self-correction ensure high accuracy now, and in the future. Due to global feedback and language agnostic analysis, Cloudmark is able to stop spam in all languages including those using double-byte characters like Chinese, Japanese and Cyrillic.

Wiles says that "Since installing Traffic Control and Authority, we've seen a further reduction in false positives for customers, which is always a good thing".

- **Improved customer satisfaction.** Customer churn related to spam is nearly always linked to accuracy, either in the form of too many unwanted messages reaching subscriber mailboxes or legitimate emails being blocked or delayed. Cloudmark improves filtering accuracy and virtually eliminates false positives, thus increasing customer satisfaction. Traffic Control provides rock-solid system availability by reducing abusive traffic and eliminates "spikes" in spam traffic that would otherwise overwhelm the email server. "This business is all about quality of service", claims Wiles. "Using both Traffic Control and Authority improves our service to our customers."

Email abuse is still a growing issue with spammers and phishers constantly trying to find new ways to beat the system. By installing Traffic Control with Cloudmark Authority, Sunflower chose a highly scalable solution that will adapt to these threats without the need for solution re-architecture or the addition of complex rule-sets. Traffic Control's "set and forget" connection management technology evolves with spammer behavior to keep abusive traffic in check. Cloudmark Authority's "future proof" architecture, which leverages real-time feedback from millions of end users, was designed to target both existing and new classes of messaging threats.

"Email isn't going away anytime soon, and sadly, neither will spam." said Wiles. "No single solution will solve the problem. Taking a layered software approach to email protection will go a long way to improving service for customers and reducing the need for more CPU. Traffic Control with Cloudmark Authority is an essential part of our strategy moving forward."

For more information
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