

Staying on track with GWAVA

The situation

Every week day, the Long Island Rail Road helps 290,000 passengers get to and from work on its 735 daily trains. A less visible part of its infrastructure are the 10 MTAs running on its GroupWise 6 system, and the 2000 e-mail accounts needed to keep North America's busiest rail road on track, and on time.

How many messages does the system handle?

"We blocked 34,000 messages—spam—in the last month," reports Network Engineer Roy Dragotta.

Mr Dragotta oversees the Rail Road's IT infrastructure. He has been employed by the transportation authority for a decade and a half. Over that time, Mr Dragotta has watched the communication and transportation technologies grow and integrate.

"I love my job. It's a very interesting area," Mr Dragotta says enthusiastically, explaining that the mix of technologies, timetables and ever-evolving needs of the transportation industry ensure a dynamic work-day for him. "You don't get bored too frequently." Essentially, he's the conductor for the LIRR's mail, rather than rail, network.

The authority boasts 1,060 rail cars, 701 miles of track and 124 train stations. The associated IT technology to maintain the rail road's 94 per cent on time record is demanding but engaging. Less enjoyable is the nettlesome problem of spam.

"Spam has gotten out of control," Mr Dragotta muses. "I'd say in the last year it's become much more of a problem." His organization is dedicated to efficiency and regularity. A public transportation system is part of the infrastructure of a region's economy and cannot halt. A derailed mail server is not an option.

GWAVA's spam blocking is both effective and integrates smoothly with the LIRR's communication infrastructure, Mr Dragotta reports. GWAVA Enterprise edition includes multi-server deployment and management tools. This places all the tools a mail administrator needs within easy reach. No additional software packages are needed to add functionality later.

Smooth Operation

"It works really well with GroupWise, which was a big consideration. It didn't require an additional Windows 2000 box," Mr Dragotta recalls. "There was no additional configuration. It fit in perfectly well with our infrastructure," he adds.

"Once you get it going, it really doesn't require any maintenance unless you want to change something." For example, when a user reported spam from a certain IP, Mr

Dragotta added the offending domain to the list of blocked senders. He, and that user were then able to return to more important tasks—keeping the trains on time.

The real-time blackhole lists are helpful in automatically adding domains originating spam. This hands-free operation makes GWAVA a pleasure to use, Mr Dragotta reports.

Anti-Virus operations are also smooth. He had anticipated that the integration of GWAVA with another pre-existing security product might be problematic, but they worked together immediately, he reports. Even administrators outside his IT department are impressed, Mr Dragotta observes. "When I tell them how much spam we block per month, they can't believe it."

Public Perception

GWAVA also helps maintain peace of mind in other ways.

The Long Island Rail Road moves 83.9 million passengers annually. Public perceptions count. With 6,000 employees, it is vital to ensure that the e-mail system is used appropriately and that communications with the lirr.org domain are professional.

"We have a public face." GWAVA content filtering technologies guarantee that only appropriate language is transmitted through the LIRR electronic mail network. This works for all mail traveling through the railroad's MTA, not merely inbound mail from the internet. The same technology which monitors Novell GroupWise at the post office level for spam and viruses can also be used for quality control of employee communications.

Being the conductor of LIRR mail system has one additional benefit. He occasionally gets to ride in the engine.

"We did that as part of our training when I first started," he recalls. "But I haven't done that in a while."

Did he get to blow the whistle?

"Of course!"

Background

GWAVA is the leading eSecurity software for Novell GroupWise. Post office level scanning allows GWAVA to monitor all e-mail in GroupWise 6 to ensure communication is both virus and spam free.

"GWAVA is uniquely focused on eSecurity software for Novell GroupWise," notes Charles Taite, Chief Technology Officer for Beginfinite, makers of GWAVA. "We have made a conscious decision to invest resources in Novell and its GroupWise platform. Thanks to Novell and DeveloperNet's invaluable assistance, we have been able to build GWAVA: a tightly integrated YES Tested & Approved eSecurity solution for GroupWise. The rapid adoption of GWAVA, and the very positive response from the GroupWise community, is proof-positive of the value of working with DeveloperNet and Novell's YES Testing program to develop high-quality solutions for Novell platforms."