

A clean bill of health, thanks to GWAVA

Gwinnett Health System admits 23,000 patients, treats more than 231,000 outpatients, and administers over 2.5 million doses of medication annually. A hospital system, however, is more than bandages and patent medicines. Any contemporary hospital needs a solid information technology department to function.

To guarantee quality medical care, the Lawrenceville, Georgia institution began using GWAVA two years ago, and has not looked back.

Selena Youngblood administers Gwinnett's IT department. It services three hospitals and support facilities. She first started with Gwinnett in 1989. "That was before we even had a network. We had a mainframe, a HP 3000." Since the COBOL days, she has seen Gwinnett's IT needs grow and evolve with the times. Currently, the system boasts 2,500 GroupWise 6.0.3 mailboxes.

Each day, Gwinnett's 700 affiliated physicians tend to the health of the community. Ms Youngblood, on the other hand, keeps the mail system healthy. Like a physician, she is worried about congestion and infection—congested mail servers thanks to spam, and infection from viruses.

Reductase Inhibitor for the Mail Server

"I would say there are 3,000 a day are blocked."

That adds up to more than one million junk mail messages a year. Ensuring doctors and medical administrators are not dealing with the frustration of endless spam deletion.

Mail is archived automatically in case it needs to be released, Ms Youngblood explains, but generally GWAVA's anti-spam heuristics engine deals with the incoming deluge of mail effectively and intelligently.

"We wanted a virus scanner first of all," the administrator says, adding, "we wanted to control the size of emails, we wanted specifically to do content filtering." GWAVA proved to be the best choice, she says, recalling the decision to buy GWAVA two years ago. "And later the spam filtering was included with GWAVA, and that has been a major factor for us because we've been able to block a lot of spam with GWAVA."

The 479-bed institution uses Symantec anti-virus software to protect its network. Ms Youngblood found that GWAVA integrated with the network-level anti-virus software very well—spam filtering, attachment blocking and virus scanning all worked without a hitch.

Moreover, they all worked without a hitch the day the Klez Virus started making the rounds.

File Fingerprinting

“The Klez virus was really bad because it changed its extension,” she recalls.

This virus had an attachment with disguised extension like FILENAME.TXT.EXE, the second of which was often hidden by Windows. The subject line and sender address were also randomly generated. This blend of techniques helped the Klez virus infect systems around the world.

GWAVA analyzes incoming mail attachments to determine what the file type is, regardless of its current extension. Malicious code lurking inside files renamed to use benevolent extensions like txt or jpg are analyzed to determine their true contents. VBS or EXE files cannot be camouflaged by using other extensions. GWAVA will find them.

Moreover, because GWAVA is installed at the network level, it provides better security than traditional anti-virus software by analyzing messages inside GroupWise’s encrypted mail archives. The mail is decrypted in a Quarantine Zone, analyzed and blocked if it contains a virus or appears to be spam.

“GWAVA really saved us,” Ms Youngblood recalls.

GWAVA does this for all mail traveling inside the MTA, not only inbound mail from the internet. This additional layer of security is made possible by its network-level integration. GWAVA is installed deep inside the GroupWise system, and this was a factor in the decision to buy GWAVA over another e-mail security product: “I like that it sits on the MTA and that it scans the post offices. As far as I know, it’s the only one that does this.”

Future Growth

Currently, Ms Youngblood is testing GroupWise 6.5. The security tools offered by the upgrade will doubtless prove useful. Health care institutions throughout the United States will have to provide high levels of e-mail security. Beginfinite’s commitment to the GroupWise environment and intimate working relationship with Novell developers is helping to guarantee that health care practitioners, administrators and IT experts will be able to communicate medical information securely.

“So far it’s met our requirements. GWAVA recently came out with GWAVAsig, which has helped with our HIPAA requirements—and it was a free download.”

GWAVAsig is a simple NLM that adds signatures to every outgoing GroupWise mail message. It uses the built-in “third-party” directory feature of the GWIA to intercept and reformat messages to ensure the signature is appended. GWAVAsig is the perfect solution for any organization that needs to add legal disclaimers for regulatory compliance.

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.”