

The San Francisco Symphony Hits the Right Note with Webroot® E-Mail Security SaaS

Founded nearly a century ago, the San Francisco Symphony is widely recognized as one of the foremost arts institutions in the United States. Nearly 600,000 people enjoy the Symphony's 230 live annual performances, and the group's recordings have won prestigious awards including eleven Grammy® awards.



The Problem

Numerous legacy systems were in place to support the Symphony's network, but its business needs had outgrown the applications' capabilities. Between email services for more than 100 staff, online ticket sales and a merchandise e-store, the Symphony was struggling with issues like spam, bandwidth consumption and online threats.

The existing in-house solution required the network to accept spam, then classify it, and then remove it from the system. Not only did this consume a great deal of bandwidth, but the solution was simply not performing well. The Symphony was receiving between 1.2 and 1.4 million spam emails per month – more than 95 percent of their total messages. The service employed basic spam filters that were missing a great deal of illegitimate messages. Employees became increasingly frustrated as more and more of their workdays were wasted sorting through spam. Even more problematic, the system crashed frequently, greatly hindering business efficiency. Email availability, employee productivity and cost effectiveness were all suffering under the weight of too much spam.

The Solution

Michael Skaff, San Francisco Symphony's Chief Information Officer, knew the network needed a more powerful messaging security solution. As Skaff began to identify requirements, analyze costs and compare vendors, he considered whether an in-house solution or software-as-a-service (SaaS) would best address business needs. The Symphony was on a short timeline, and research showed that SaaS offered a faster implementation, as well as greater efficiency and lower costs. Skaff spoke to a Webroot representative at an event and was impressed with the capabilities of Webroot E-Mail Security SaaS. After learning more about the speed and ease of implementation, he knew the solution was ideal for the Symphony's needs.

Within 14 days, Webroot E-Mail Security SaaS was rolled out to all 100+ full-time employees at the San Francisco Symphony. The timeline included complete training for all four members of the IT team. "The implementation was a beautiful thing," Skaff said. "Being able to work with Webroot to get trained and implement the solution in such a short amount of time was extraordinary. The process could have taken much longer with an in-house solution."

In the five months since Webroot E-Mail Security SaaS has been in place, the Symphony has been extremely satisfied with the enhanced protection. The service uses seven different levels of spam detection and multiple best-of-breed filters to scan and filter all inbound, outbound and internal messages in the cloud. Webroot is the only messaging security service that is specifically designed to quantify sender reputation via advanced statistical models, which allows for more accurate and highly scalable detection. The SLA guarantees protection against 98 percent of spam, 100 percent of known viruses, and a false positive rate of less than one in 300,000.

In addition to better protection, Webroot E-Mail Security SaaS is demonstrating a rapid and definitive return on investment (ROI). The Symphony saw an immediate increase in productivity and recovery of bandwidth. Email service availability also improved. Given the number of hours saved and the headcount rate, Skaff estimates the company is saving a significant amount of money.

After seeing the advantages of Webroot E-Mail Security SaaS firsthand, Michael Skaff predicts more companies will look to software-as-a-service as a strategic solution. "IT has to evolve and I believe SaaS is how it's going to evolve," Skaff commented. "Success depends on getting in front of trends and leveraging the resources that are out there. If an architecture and functionality exists that works for your needs, why not use it? SaaS is a necessary step for IT development."

Comments

"Webroot E-Mail Security SaaS has been an outstanding solution for us. Particularly in tight economic times – with all the focus on headcount and overhead – SaaS is an easy way to be more efficient. We saw an immediate payback because it's saving people time, and it's saving bandwidth. You hear about SaaS providing benefits like greater efficiency, better performance and easier implementation. I cannot stress how strongly we saw the benefits of this. One of the most powerful things about Webroot E-Mail Security SaaS is the agility it gives your business. It's just about turning it on and making it work. I've actually had people stop me in the hallways and say 'Thank you, thank you for doing this. This actually made a difference in my day-to-day life.'" – Michael Skaff, Chief Information Officer, The San Francisco Symphony

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