

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

MessageLabs



Intercoop Ltd



RETAIL SERVICE FIRM ROUTS SPAM, ELIMINATES MALWARE AND ARCHIVES BUSINESS EMAIL WITH SYMANTEC HOSTED SERVICES

Asia has become the world's manufacturing powerhouse. However, managing all the details – from sourcing the best product to ensuring quality and timely delivery – is not always easy.

That's where Intercoop Ltd steps in. Headquartered in Hong Kong, Intercoop has eight offices throughout Asia, in such diverse locations as Karachi, New Delhi, Dhaka, Ho Chi Minh City, Ningbo and Surabaya. Acting as a buying office and service organisation, Intercoop provides everything from information and sourcing to order follow up and quality control for a broad range of consumer goods.

The products it handles are destined for retail cooperatives, hypermarkets, supermarkets, discount stores and specialty stores across Europe. Today, Intercoop indirectly serves a European customer base estimated at upwards of 100 million consumers.

“Our products are divided into two main lines – hard goods and textiles all destined for hypermarkets, supermarkets, discount stores and specialty stores in Europe. In addition to dealing with customers and producers, we also manage an extensive team of product specialists, inspectors and logistics professionals,” said Intercoop's Senior IT Officer, Man Ng.

Fast and reliable communications are critical to managing operations across such a massive geographical footprint. In Intercoop's case, the communications channel of choice is email. However, in recent years, the medium proved to be a mixed blessing.

Rising spam levels, virulent virus outbreaks and the challenge of archiving increasing volumes of business email made life for Man and his small IT team even more challenging.

SPAM SPIRALS OUT OF CONTROL

Intercoop's primary data centre is located in Hong Kong, where a Microsoft Exchange email server supports the activities of more than 200 users, communicating with each other as well as with manufacturers, customers and other business partners.

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Man Ng
Senior IT Officer
Intercoop Ltd

“The SHS Security-as-a-Service offering delivers all of the performance it promises, without any management overhead, capital investment or continual and costly upgrades. It just works, reliably and invisibly.”

A little over a year ago, the volume of business email was growing steadily but spam levels – complete with a lethal payload of embedded malware – spiked. In short order, spam accounted for up to 50 per cent of all traffic.

“We relied on a software solution running on our gateway to screen email for viruses and other malicious code. But, it couldn’t stop the spam users had to delete manually, said Ng.

“That was a lengthy process and a terrible waste of people’s time. There was always the risk of someone accidentally deleting a genuine email by accident and either missing an important instruction or failing to respond to a critical customer request.”

The spam flood caused other problems for Intercoop. The AV software required regular management, including new patches and signature updates every time a new virus appeared on the scene.

In addition, the organisation’s storage resources were becoming stretched, partly due to the fact that users were archiving spam, which had not been deleted. The idea of paying to archive garbage was annoying. However, the prospect of conducting a disaster recovery drill and restoring messages potentially containing malicious code was a clear and present threat to the business’ IT infrastructure.

Recognising that things were coming to a head, Ng and his staff began looking for a way to protect the data centre from malware attacks and also halt the steady flow of spam hitting Intercoop’s email boxes every day. It did not take long for them to decide that Symantec Hosted Services’ (SHS) MessageLabs offering fitted their requirements – stopping viruses, killing spam and safely archiving emails.

GUARANTEED PERFORMANCE AND UNIQUE BENEFITS

“We looked at what a variety of vendors were offering. Only Symantec Hosted Services guaranteed to stop 100 per cent of known and unknown viruses at zero day – long before other vendors spot the virus, write and distribute a patch. And only SHS guaranteed to reduce spam to virtually zero without compromising the delivery of genuine messages,” said Ng.

Ng noted that IT teams are supposed to support a business, however, it’s easy to get distracted. When that happens, organisations often find that all their resources are fully committed to managing existing systems, with little or no capacity to exploit new developments.



Confidence in a connected world.

“Our users are definitely happy that their email boxes are no longer stuffed with garbage. They can get straight to work without wasting time deleting dubious messages or the fear that their system will become infected with some new virus or piece of bot-ware,”

Intercoop was impressed with the value proposition of a cloud-based offering that required no up-front investment, management or any on premise equipment or software.

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EASY IMPLEMENTATION

The MessageLabs’ suite was a breeze to implement. In the case of AntiVirus and AntiSpam, it was a case of changing the DNS settings on the Exchange server to point to the MessageLabs systems.

The Email Archiving solution was implemented remotely and is already managing approximately 100GB of data.

While performance is a paramount concern, Ng admits that pricing is also an important consideration. Again, SHS proved its worth to Intercoop by freeing the firm from the need to purchase, manage and maintain a sizeable archiving infrastructure.

“We have also eliminated a potential point of failure. All of our email passes through the SHS data centre and is backed-up on its servers. That means that, even if our own mail server was to fail, or our data centre burned down, the data and email traffic would be safe,” said Ng.

SPAM NOW OFF THE MENU AT INTERCOOP

Since implementing the trio of MessageLabs solutions, Intercoop has seen its spam levels drop precipitously. Today, spam is close to zero and the organisation has not had a single case of email-borne malware for over a year.

“Our users are definitely happy that their email boxes are no longer stuffed with garbage. They can get straight to work without wasting time deleting dubious messages or the fear that their system will become infected with some new virus or piece of bot-ware,” said Ng.

“The IT team is also very happy with the new SHS SaaS approach. We can focus on our real jobs and let the MessageLabs solutions get on with theirs.”



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Solution at a glance**Business Drivers**

- Reliable communications with an Asia-wide network of offices and an extensive customer-base in Europe
- Maintaining productivity of staff at all levels
- Protect the business (from attacks by malware and the accidental deletion of genuine emails when clearing spam from mailboxes)
- Efficiently archiving email

Technology Challenges

- Eliminating spam and malware effectively
- Meeting goals without major capital investment
- Achieving protection without adding IT management overhead

Solution

- MessageLabs Hosted AntiSpam Filtering Service
- MessageLabs Hosted Email AntiVirus Service
- MessageLabs Hosted Email Archiving Service

Size of organisation

- 200+ users
- 8 offices in Asia Pacific
- Extensive European customer base including more than 100 million consumers

Business value and technical benefits

- Valuable staff time saved by automating spam elimination
- No malware outbreaks since deployment of MessageLabs' AntiVirus Service
- Email archiving infrastructure no longer required after implementing MessageLabs' Hosted Email Archiving Service and single point of failure eliminated
- IT resources can be deployed to more productive output such as streamlining operational efficiency



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