

Municipality of Guadalupe, Nuevo León, México



Providing Control and Data Protection with Solutions from Symantec

In 2006, when Gabriel Navarro arrived to head the Municipality of Guadalupe's IT department, he knew he had only three years to completely modernize its hardware and software infrastructure, and protect its network from security threats. Solutions from Symantec allowed his IT team to safeguard the network, reducing IT staff time for malware remediation by more than 99 percent. He also gained control over employees' Internet and IM usage, reduced spam by 71 percent, and provided reliable backups to safeguard the Municipality's vital data.

Suburb of the "Sultan"

Founded in 1716, Guadalupe is a city of more than 600,000 in the Northern Mexican state of Nuevo León. It's a suburb of Monterrey, Nuevo León's capital, sometimes called "The Sultan of the North" (Sultana del Norte) because it stands as an industrial and business center for the nation, and is one of México's most technologically advanced regions. As befits this status, several municipalities in the Greater Monterrey area are working to upgrade their technology to keep pace with the times and deal with ever-growing security threats, according to Gabriel Navarro, IT director for the Municipality of Guadalupe.

Navarro came to the job in November 2006, knowing that updating Guadalupe's systems would be something of a race against time, as administration appointments there last only three years. He found he had his work cut out for him. "The Municipality's technology was old," he says. "They had an HP 3000 with an Image database. The applications also were more than 15 years old. The idea was to change all this—implement new hardware and software, and obtain protection from intruders, inside and out."

From Five Viruses a Week to One Every Six Weeks

To strengthen the security of Guadalupe's systems, the Municipality deployed Symantec™ Endpoint Protection in November 2007. It had a dramatic and immediate effect. "Before, we were getting around five viruses a week," Navarro says. "It was really a pain in the neck. Now it's very seldom, maybe once every six weeks."

The new solution has freed up a lot of time for the Municipality's 15-person IT staff to work on other projects, he says. "Dealing with viruses would take eight hours a day for two or three people," he says. "They would have to get to all the infected PCs to clean up the problem." With Endpoint Protection, he says, it takes one or two people about half an hour to deal with the now-infrequent viruses. "We can detect it and, in many cases, deal with it through the network," he says.

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Gabriel Navarro

IT Director

Municipality of Guadalupe

ORGANIZATION PROFILE

Guadalupe (www.guadalupe.gob.mx) is a city of more than 600,000 and a suburb of Monterrey, capital of the northern Mexican state of Nuevo León. The region is a business, industrial, and technological center, and Monterrey is known as the "Sultan of the North." The Municipality of Guadalupe has about 4,000 employees, about 800 computer users, and an IT staff of 15.

INDUSTRY

Government

SOLUTION

Endpoint Security, Messaging Security, Backup and Recovery

Symantec Endpoint Protection reduced malware disruptions from five a week to one every six weeks.

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Gabriel Navarro
IT Director
Municipality of Guadalupe

Endpoint Protection also allows Navarro to enforce strict policies about employee Internet use. “We want them to use the Internet to do their jobs, not look things up or chat,” he says. “Endpoint Protection gives you that control to limit their Internet access.”

Thanks to greater control, fewer disruptions, and an easier workload for IT staff, he estimates time to payback for Endpoint Protection is one year.

Spam Takes Up 20 Hours a Week

Another major challenge for Navarro’s IT team was dealing with the deluge of spam arriving in users’ mailboxes each day. About 70 percent of incoming messages were spam, he says, so to keep these messages from cluttering up mailboxes, IT staff would remove them manually, a job which took one staff member about 20 hours a week. Not only that, Municipality employees would often find their outgoing emails blocked because incoming spam carried malware that would use Guadalupe’s system to send out more spam, which caused many Internet service providers (ISPs) to blacklist its IP address.

To solve these problems, the Municipality implemented Symantec Premium AntiSpam. Now, only 20 percent of messages that get through are spam, Navarro says, and the only time his staff has to deal with this issue is when the software occasionally blocks a legitimate message and users ask to have it recovered.

Because having Guadalupe’s IP address blocked was such an impediment, the Municipality considers that time to payback for Premium AntiSpam was immediate. “In the government, if they ask us for information, but they don’t receive what we send back, that’s a big problem,” he says.

Managing Instant Messaging

A further problem, Navarro reports, was Guadalupe employees’ use—or overuse—of instant messaging. “They used chat all the time, and sometimes they used it to send important information or documents,” he says. “I wanted to avoid misuse of this medium.”

Symantec IM Manager gave Navarro the control he was seeking, for instance, by preventing attachment of files to instant messages. “They have to send things a different way, using Microsoft Outlook, rather than chat,” he says. Also, though IT doesn’t normally review IM transcripts, the fact that they have that ability helps keep people in line. “I want them using chat properly, not for talking to their friends,” he says. “They know they are being watched, so they don’t misuse this tool.”

That is, those who still have access to chat at all. Guadalupe’s IT team uses IM Manager to strictly control who does and does not have access to IM software. He estimates that only 10 percent of Guadalupe’s 800 computer users—those who genuinely need it for their jobs—have access to chat. He’s currently considering also enabling internal chat within the Municipality’s network for other users.

Protecting Vital Data

In another big change, the Municipality implemented Symantec Backup Exec™. “The idea was to protect our ERP system, SIMUN, which we also implemented at that time,” Navarro says.

The Municipality now uses Backup Exec to back up 100 GB of data to tape every night, a process which takes one hour, Navarro reports. So far, no restores have been needed, but the IT staff tested the solution extensively before deploying it, and found that restores were 100 percent accurate.

Navarro says he thinks of the solution in terms of employment insurance. “If we don’t have backup, I don’t have a job this year,” he says. “If you have it and don’t need to use it, that’s good. But if you don’t have it—forget it.”

A Strategic Business Partnership

The Municipality worked with Microsistemas Gerenciales, SA de CV, commonly known as MIGESA, to implement its Symantec solutions. "MIGESA provides a business partnership," he says. "They support us, they give us the best answers they have, and they chose Symantec." Though MIGESA provides support and consulting help whenever the Municipality needs it, some Symantec engineers also worked directly with Navarro on creating and deploying Symantec solutions.

"I have a partnership with both," he says. "They came to me together, and created the strategy to help me achieve the protection I needed."

SOLUTION AT A GLANCE

Key Challenges

- Ensure network security
- Control employee Internet and IM use
- Reduce IT time for virus remediation
- Reduce spam and IT time dealing with it
- Ensure data availability if hardware fails

Solution

Security for endpoints, email, and instant messaging; backup and recovery for city data

Symantec Products

Symantec™ Endpoint Protection
Symantec Backup Exec™ 11d
Symantec™ IM Manager
Symantec™ Premium AntiSpam

Symantec Partner

Microsistemas Gerenciales, SA de CV (MIGESA), www.migesa.com.mx

Technology Environment

- Applications: SIMUN (government ERP solution locally produced in Nuevo León); Microsoft Exchange 2003; 072 software (alerts community to issues within 72 hours).; VoIP
- Databases: Oracle8; Microsoft SQL Server
- Servers: Six HP ProLiant BL460c servers in SAN scheme running Microsoft Windows Server 2003; two Stratos servers running Linux
- Storage: HP EVA 4000 SAN system
- Tape library: HP StorageWorks MSL2024

Business Results

- One malware incident every six weeks, down from five a week
- More than 99% reduction in IT time spent on malware remediation, from 80 hours a week to one hour every six weeks
- Projected one year to payback for Symantec Endpoint Protection
- 100% accuracy in data restores
- 71% reduction in spam reaching users' mailboxes
- IM and Internet policies enforced