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#### CUSTOMER SUCCESS

## Swisscom IT Services

### Looking Towards a Bright Future with Antispam Protection

'Honeypots' are more normally associated with bees or errant Cold War spies, and less with IT strategies. But in the case of Swisscom IT Services, one of the leading Swiss providers of information technology solutions, a honeypot has been instrumental in attracting and checking up to 200,000 emails every day against Symantec Brightmail™ Message Filter. As a result, Swisscom IT Services is achieving 99.9 percent effectiveness against spam and phishing attacks on behalf of up to 60,000 mailboxes. Simultaneously, CPU server performance rose by 50 percent and there was a 10-fold decrease in the help desk administration effort required to resolve email related cases. Honey never tasted so sweet.

#### Two Much Spam in One Billion Emails per Year

It's been a long year for the IT Services and Messaging teams at Swisscom IT Services. The company is one of the leading Swiss providers of information technology solutions, offering integration and operational services as complete or partial outsourcing projects to clients in banking, assurance, transportation, and industry. At the beginning of the year it was becoming increasingly clear to the messaging team that the volume of spam processed by the company was reaching unacceptable new highs, and needed to be addressed. To put the issue into context, the company was processing up to one billion in-bound emails every year on behalf of its clients in the telecommunications, financial sector, healthcare, and public sector—and among that one billion were an unacceptably high number of damaging spam, phishing, viruses, and other unwanted emails.

Swisscom IT Services provides an outsourced messaging platform and operations for up to 12 clients, offering each one a mail backbone service—most notably for their Microsoft® Exchange and Lotus Domino® environments. Besides the harm that the spam email could do to the infrastructure, Swisscom IT Services's helpdesk was also being overwhelmed by the number of support tickets and cases associated with the spam email. The problems didn't stop there: spam was also beginning to impact CPU performance, as Johnny Raetz, head of messaging explains.

#### ORGANIZATION PROFILE

**Website:** [www.swisscom.com](http://www.swisscom.com)

**Industry:** Technology

**Headquarters:** Bern, Switzerland

**Employees:** 2,700+

#### SYMANTEC SOLUTION

Messaging Security

#### Why Symantec?

- Effective spam filtering
- Comprehensive messaging security

“Swisscom needs to offer clients a stable and flexible mail backbone environment. It’s also imperative that the infrastructure is secure from phishing emails and other spam—in particular for our banking customers,” he says. “The problem for Swisscom IT Services was that spam was growing by about 100 percent year-on-year and staff were spending an increasing proportion of their time dealing with the problem,” he says. “In the spring of last year, we also experienced a performance issue on the in-bound mail service hosts, which meant the antispam solution we were using was devouring as much as 80 percent of total CPU time. There was barely any idle time on the servers, and that meant we were missing some of the spam because it wasn’t being scanned.

“MessageLabs [now part of Symantec] said in its 2008 Annual Report that, ‘Switzerland was the most spammed country in the world during 2008’. Our measured spam rate was 94 percent. That’s another reason why it is so important for Swisscom IT Services to have a rock solid antispam solution,” explains Pascal Arnold, a professional systems engineer on the messaging team.

At first glance, it appears likely that Swisscom IT Services had under-specified its hardware and had little option other than to invest in additional hardware to counter the performance issue.

But that wasn’t necessary. Working closely with Symantec Solution Architects and Product Managers, Swisscom IT Services deployed Symantec Brightmail Message Filter 6.1 into its Sun Solaris (production environment) and virtualized Linux (test environment), using Commercial Sendmail as the MTA (Mail Transfer Agent). Very quickly, Brightmail Message Filter introduced effective spam filtering to Swisscom IT Services’ mail backbone. Deployed at the email gateway and supporting up to 60,000 email clients, the easy-to-manage solution protects the firm against spam, phishing, viruses, and other unwanted email. “We are currently experiencing 99.9 percent effectiveness against spam with Symantec Brightmail Message Filter,” says Pascal

## SOLUTION AT A GLANCE

### Business Drivers

- Ensure clients have fast, uninterrupted access to email
- Reduce the cost of technology services and management

### Technology Challenges

- Reduce growing burden of spam email in clients’ Exchange/Domino environments
- Overcome underwhelming performance on email servers

### Solution

Comprehensive messaging security solution with ‘honeypot’ tactics to trap unwanted spam

### Symantec Products

- Symantec Brightmail™ Message Filter 6.1
- Symantec Brightmail™ Traffic Shaper

### Technology Environment

- Hardware platform: 3 x Sun Fire V880s
- Operating systems: Sun™ Solaris™ 9
- Applications: Sendmail Mail Transfer Agent (MTA), additional commercial Sendmail products, Brightmail Message Filter - Integration as Milter
- End users: Up to 60,000, including outsourcing customers

## BUSINESS VALUE AND TECHNICAL BENEFITS

- Introduced 99.9% effective spam filtering to Swisscom IT Services’ mail backbone
- Protected up to 60,000 email clients against spam, phishing, viruses, and other unwanted email
- Honeypot deployed with Symantec further improved antispam, attracting up to 100,000 spam mails every day to a redundant domain
- Achieved 30 false positive business-related emails each year out of one billion in-bound emails
- Improved CPU server performance by 50%
- Led to a 10-fold decrease in the help desk administration effort required to resolve email related cases

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### Pascal Arnold

Professional Systems Engineer, Messaging Swisscom IT Services

“The local honeypot here in Switzerland played a vital role in improving messaging security. The rate of false positives we’re achieving is remarkable, something in the region of 30 mails each year out of one billion in-bound emails.”

### Simon Abbuehl

Professional Systems Engineer, Messaging Swisscom IT Services

“New forms of spam mails are recognized significantly more quickly and this is resulting in an essential increase in the quality of spam and phishing protection. It’s difficult to see how any other messaging security could achieve the results Symantec has achieved.”

**Johnny Raetzo**

Head of Messaging  
Swisscom IT Services

Arnold, a professional systems engineer on the messaging team. “This has made a considerable contribution to an improved quality of service within the mail backbone environment.

**Honeypot Attracts up to 100,000 Spam Emails Every Day**

As part of the configuration, Swisscom IT Services deployed a ‘honeypot’ in two stages to further improve spam email identification. In the first stage, the team set up 1,000 mailboxes spreading these addresses out onto the Internet. Clearly, any mail received was identifiable as spam and was forwarded onto the Symantec Probe Network as the basis for the filtering mechanism. In the second stage of the honeypot, a redundant domain was created and this attracted up to 100,000 spam mails every day. Of around 200,000 spam emails received each day, most of them were caught by Brightmail. Any missed spam was immediately forwarded to the Symantec Pattern Development Center.

“The local honeypot here in Switzerland played a vital role in improving messaging security..” explains Simon Abbuehl. “The rate of false positives we’re achieving is remarkable, something in the region of 30 mails each year out of one billion in-bound emails.”

But what about the all important performance following the use of Symantec Brightmail Message Filter 6.1? Whereas before there was barely any CPU idle time on the servers during peak working hours and spam wasn’t being scanned, the use of the FastPass functionality in Brightmail has cut CPU usage by 50 percent, boosting idle time at peak periods to 60 percent.

**Email Administration in the Helpdesk Falls 10-Fold**

Helpdesk enquiries have also fallen. “The call center has experienced a 10-fold decrease in the administration effort required to resolve email related cases following the Brightmail Message Filter implementation. New forms of spam mails are recognized significantly quicker and this is resulting in an essential increase in the quality of spam and phishing protection. And all of this has been achieved with incredibly low false positives. It’s difficult to see how any other messaging security could achieve the results Symantec has achieved,” says Johnny Raetzo.

With the messaging security solution now delivering first-rate value at Swisscom IT Services, it’s time for the team to turn to other activities. This includes a review and possible roll-out of the Symantec Brightmail™ Traffic Shaper (formerly Symantec™ Mail Security 8100 Series), which shapes email traffic at the TCP protocol level and stops spam before it enters the network.

“Symantec has been incredibly proactive in responding to our new requirements, and this has often resulted in enhancements to the products themselves. This proactiveness is very important in messaging security because the goalposts are changing so frequently. There’s a very good team spirit among the Symantec employees, whether its Product Management, the local Sales team, or the Antispam Engineering development team. We congratulate the Symantec team on their vision and support,” says Johnny Raetzo.