



Industry

Food quality assurance & biosecurity services

Product

Websense Hosted Email Security

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Lynley Lee,

Information Communications & Technology Manager,
AsureQuality

case study: AsureQuality

Websense Passes the AsureQuality Test

Introduction

When Australian and New Zealand consumers buy their groceries there's a good chance that much of the food has already passed an inspection by AsureQuality, one of the world's leading providers of food quality assurance and biosecurity services. The food testing giant was created in October 2007 by the merger of two New Zealand organisations, AgriQuality and ASURE.

Every day, more than 1,700 AsureQuality staff at nearly 140 locations throughout Australasia are responsible for auditing, inspecting and certifying food quality and food management systems. When a farmer sends his milk to a major producer, AsureQuality experts provide the inspection that ensures it meets required standards. Tests carried out by the company include soil examinations, organic certification, pest and disease inspections and verification. This enables food to meet export regulations and helps secure valuable international market opportunities.

Making sense of spam

Before the 2007 merger, AgriQuality was an organisation of approximately 850 people. Its widely dispersed and mobile workforce made network performance one of the major concerns for Information Communications and Technology Manager, Lynley Lee. In early 2007 Lee noticed that the volume of spam received daily was rapidly increasing and beginning to place stresses on the company's systems. Lee explains, “We were receiving over 100,000 e-mails a month. Much of it was spam and our server was struggling to cope.”

At the time, the company did use filtering software, but it didn't solve the problem that e-mails still had to arrive onto the mail server before being sorted into legitimate e-mails or spam. The server continued to suffer and staff still had to check the filter to ensure the right e-mails were being caught. “It caused a lot of frustration,” Lee says. “People were annoyed at the quantity of spam getting through and the sheer volume increased the likelihood of receiving a false positive assessment of e-mails.”

Simplifying the IT environment

Lee decided it was time to simplify the IT environment. Her first step was to move incoming e-mail off AgriQuality's servers completely. She chose Websense Hosted Email Security, an on demand service designed to block spam and viruses before they reach the network, thereby dramatically reducing e-mail bandwidth and storage requirements. At the same time, Lee overhauled the company's approach to Internet use by adopting Websense Hosted Web Security, a step that would allow the introduction of centralised Web policy management even throughout the company's remote locations, home offices and its mobile laptops.

About Websense

Websense, Inc. (NASDAQ: WBSN) Websense, the global leader in integrated Web, messaging, and data security, enables its customers' success by protecting essential information in the Web 2.0 world. Only Websense solutions provide complete visibility and control over who may use Web, email, or information resources; what information must be protected; how information can be exchanged; and where users and information can go on the Internet. Websense keeps employees productive on any network, anytime and anywhere, to help businesses realize the full potential of constant connectivity while minimizing the risks of data leaks due to human error and malicious attacks. Websense is Essential Information Protection™.

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“Configuring these changes was easy,” Lee acknowledges, “but the practicality of transitioning to hosted e-mail had a few challenges. The good side of it was that the Websense team was very focused in supporting us during the transition and everyone got on board to resolve any initial hiccups.”

Once the hosted service was fully up and running, Lee estimates that the volume of spam reaching AgriQuality was reduced by 90 per cent. “It had a fairly high impact,” she says. “It made us able to better manage spam and it achieved our aim of taking the load off our systems. Also, the service eliminated malware at the Internet level and stopped e-mail borne threats from reaching our network.”

Lee continues to explain, “With Websense Hosted Web Security, we wanted to manage Internet use more effectively and we began by blocking certain Web site categories such as pornography and sex. We are using the Websense reporting tools available with the hosted service to conduct limited monitoring of sites visited by our staff when they are surfing the Internet at work. We have the tools to respond to human resources queries if necessary.”

However, with 2007 dominated by the merger with ASURE, a move that doubled the size of the organisation, Lee admits that Internet policies and governance have not been an immediate priority for the business.

“It is something that we plan to look at in the future but, for now, we are quite fortunate in that we have educated our staff about Web use quite well. More importantly,” she concludes, “our next project with Websense will be conducted in mid 2008 and will involve extending the use of Websense Hosted Email Security to protect all 1,700 staff under the merged AsureQuality.”

Centralising the company’s Web and e-mail security through a hosted solution during this acquisition period has simplified AsureQuality’s IT environment, increased the network efficiency and created room to expand into.

It’s a move that will ensure Lee and her team continue to keep spam and malware threats at bay as AsureQuality grows in the years ahead.