

New Traffic Shaping Technology Enhances MessageLabs Anti-Spam Infrastructure

MessageLabs, the leading provider of email security and management services to businesses, today announced enhancements to its global anti-spam infrastructure designed to further reduce spam volumes and keep customers' email clean, providing businesses with an efficient and effective managed spam filtering service.

Leveraging its technology partnership with Symantec, MessageLabs is currently deploying Symantec's latest traffic shaping technology across its global network of 14 data centers at the outermost perimeter of its infrastructure, allowing all MessageLabs clients to benefit from the technology.

"With spam accounting for 73 per cent of email in 2004, MessageLabs is constantly looking at new ways to improve our global infrastructure and enhance our services to our customers," said Jos White, president of MessageLabs. "By adding another layer of protection to identify known spam at the outermost edge of our network, we are able to further concentrate our own technology on identifying new spam and other malicious threats to keep our customers' email clean."

"This also highlights the benefit of businesses adopting managed services - we invest in the latest technology on behalf of our customers to protect them, rather than our customers having the hassle and expense of doing it themselves."

Symantec's technology shapes email traffic at the TCP (Transmission Control Protocol) level, decreasing the volume of inbound spam even as spammers increase the volume. It identifies abusive senders and throttles their connections back at the network level, ultimately forcing the originator of the messages to alter the rate at which packets are placed on the network.

It uses standard features of the TCP/IP protocol such as error correction and quality of service to control the sender. This not only slows the flow of packets into the MessageLabs network, but can cause the traffic to back up on the spammer's servers rather than forcing MessageLabs to receive, identify and then handle known spam on behalf of customers.

"Abusive senders are slowed, often dramatically, and legitimate senders are actually accelerated since they are no longer competing for the same resources with abusive senders," said Enrique Salem, senior vice president, gateway and network security of Symantec Corp. "By shaping at the TCP protocol level, MessageLabs can reduce the volume of unwanted messages targeted at its customers, freeing up bandwidth on its global infrastructure."

Effectively coupled with MessageLabs services, including MessageLabs Anti-Spam and Anti-Virus, this enhanced infrastructure provides a comprehensive multi-layered approach to combat email threats and keep them away from the corporate network.

MessageLabs and Symantec announced their technology partnership in September 2004 to offer enhanced managed anti-spam services to organizations around the world. Under the agreement, MessageLabs has already integrated Symantec Brightmail Anti-Spam technology alongside its own proprietary Skeptic(tm) predictive anti-spam technology, creating a highly effective and accurate, completely managed anti-spam solution - MessageLabs Anti-Spam 4.0. For more details, visit: www.messagelabs.com/AS4

By combining Symantec's anti-spam technology with MessageLabs' managed email security environment, enterprise customers worldwide will be able to leverage Symantec's leading anti-spam technology and expertise in combating spam as part of a truly multi-layered solution. The relationship enables MessageLabs to provide businesses with multiple protections, easing the burden on in-house IT resources and offering higher levels of service and support.

In summary

This is another example of how MessageLabs leverages multiple layers of technology/techniques to combat email threats;

MessageLabs is the first and only managed service to incorporate traffic shaping technology;

Traffic Shaping technology works at the TCP/IP protocol level, pushing the fight against spam further back towards the spammers themselves;

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