

GFI MailEssentials eliminates the hassle of spam for many Atlanta-area non-profits

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TechBridge is a membership-based technology company in Atlanta, Georgia that supports non-profit organizations in the metro Atlanta area. TechBridge provides its 200+ clients with a plethora of services, including free hosting of email, websites and tech support calls. The non-profits they serve range in size from a few people using one server to clients with 18 servers and over 200 users. With a mission to help other non-profits leverage technology to better serve the community, TechBridge allows non-profits to solve mission-critical initiatives, improve communications with donors and increase operating efficiencies. TechBridge also offers scheduled services, allowing their clients to receive server checks and preventative maintenance updates.

TechBridge is a GFI MailEssentials reseller for non-profits

"Our product line is geared pretty much to supplying Microsoft products, and many of our clients are hosting their own email with Microsoft Exchange, either with a small business server or with a full blown Exchange server. Once they turn on their email server, they get hit with spam. They get completely inundated with it. That's where GFI comes in," said Jeremy Kerl, network engineer, for TechBridge.

GFI MailEssentials for Exchange/SMTP is server-based and installs on the mail server or at the Gateway, eliminating the deployment and administration hassle of desktop-based anti-spam and anti-phishing products. TechBridge is a GFI MailEssentials reseller for non-profits. "We're not trying to make any money, so we are able to turn around and offer this product to our clients at our discounted price," said Kerl. "Every little bit helps these organizations, because they don't have a lot of extra cash."

Through NPower, Microsoft provides free software to non-profits reducing the overall price for deploying Microsoft Windows 2003 Standard Servers and Microsoft Exchange 2000/2003 Servers. TechBridge further enhances Microsoft's NPower initiative for these organizations by providing GFI MailEssentials also at reduced rates.

With GFI MailEssentials integrating seamlessly with Microsoft Exchange 2000/2003, bundling GFI technology with Microsoft products allows non-profits in Atlanta to receive greater technological capabilities at a cheaper price.

GFI MailEssentials saves time

Email spammers find ways to clutter email boxes in all organizations. The overwhelming amount of unnecessary emails was not different for any of TechBridge's clients. "It wasn't uncommon for our clients to have over 100 pieces of spam in their mailbox on a daily basis."

By using GFI MailEssentials, TechBridge is able to provide its non-profit clients a breath of fresh air from unnecessary emails that overwhelm the employee's inboxes. "GFI MailEssentials saves time: I would think it frees up at least 30 minutes a day by either having to drag spam to junk mail, delete it or just dealing with it," said Kerl. "When I say they get 100 a day, I'm not exaggerating. I've had several clients come to me and say, 'You guys have got to do something!'"

At the same time, GFI MailEssentials gives you the flexibility to choose what to do with spam. Messages can be deleted, moved or forwarded to a public email address or folder, or send it to individual customizable folders (for example, a "junk mail" folder) in the end-users' inboxes. This allows users to easily review mail that has been flagged as spam and have the final say in where it goes.

99.9% coverage on spam

GFI MailEssentials allows TechBridge clients to effectively reduce spam by providing flexibility to the users to create anti-spam rules that align with his/her normal email use. For example,

GFI MailEssentials allows suspect email messages to be blacklisted for analysis and whitelist those email messages known to be acceptable without having to contact the network administrator.

GFI MailEssentials analyzes the whole spam message, not just keywords or known spam signatures, and learns from the users' outbound email and ham data (email that is wanted), to greatly reduce false positives. Over time, the software increases its effectiveness by learning more about the user, new spam and new valid email messages. The dataset is unique to each individual company making it nearly impossible to bypass.

"What seems to be the biggest hit against the organizations is sites that are blacklisted, and the other big thing is directory harvesting, so the first thing I do when I'm installing is turn those on to be deleted," Kerl continued, "So anything that's on a known blacklist, or is coming through as directory harvesting gets deleted. With those two things I can immediately reduce 95% of incoming spam." Directory harvesting (this is a technique used by spammers that involves picking up a domain and generating names to which spam email are then issued hoping that one will go through) was a large problem for TechBridge clients. By using GFI MailEssentials, TechBridge was able to blacklist messages like these, eliminating spam in mailboxes of its clients.

In addition to blacklisting, Bayesian filtering widely is acknowledged by leading experts and publications as the best way to catch spam. A Bayesian filter uses a mathematical approach based on known spam and ham. This gives it a tremendous advantage over other spam solutions that just check for keywords or rely on downloading signatures of known spam. It has nearly eliminated all the spam for a couple TechBridge clients. "I have two clients that have Bayesian running now, and obviously that's the best situation, because once that thing learns your email, they're up to about 99.9% coverage on spam."

The spam data is continuously updated by GFI and is automatically downloaded by GFI MailEssentials, whereas the ham data is automatically collected from your own outbound email. The Bayesian filter is constantly learning new spam tricks.

"GFI is easier to use than its competitors and much more comprehensive. I've worked with GFI since 2003, and I am really impressed with the interface and the ease of dealing with the filters," said Kerl. "You can send spam directly to the junk mail in the user's mailbox, and it's much more user friendly than what I've seen with any of the other packages that I've looked at. I have found GFI to be the best and easiest for installation, flexibility, and how it interacts with the mail client."

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