

## Adams Golf Inc.



### Stemming the Growing Flood of Spam with Solutions from Symantec

Early this year, the email system at Adams Golf came to an almost complete halt. The culprit was spam—hundreds of thousands of spam messages per day—although the company supports only 180 email users. With its email server and T1 line badly overloaded, the company turned to Symantec Hosted Mail Security. Now email is flowing smoothly, and Adams Golf has saved more than \$12,000 in hardware costs, minimized disruption to employees from spam—and freed up an IT staff member who used to spend about one day a week sorting through spam messages.

#### Overwhelmed by Spam

Adams Golf, Inc., designs, assembles and markets innovative golf clubs and accessories—and nothing else. That single focus has allowed the company to make several high-profile innovations in the industry. Its Tight Lies Fairway Wood, with its upside-down head, is still cherished by hundreds of thousands of golfers 10 years after it was first introduced. Today the company specializes in hybrid and hybrid iron clubs. According to an independent survey, Adams Golf hybrids were used by more professional players than any other brand of hybrid at all four major PGA championships in 2008.

The 125 computer users in the Adams Golf headquarters office, as well as some 55 independent sales reps, depend on the company's email system for important messages that often include customer orders. In February, that system came to a grinding halt, when Adams Golf began receiving an unprecedented volume of email—30 million messages a month—nearly all of it spam. "Somebody got our name," says Joe Wooster, director of information technology at Adams Golf. "And even though we took all the necessary precautions, the volume increased exponentially between December 2007 to February 2008. The ramp was not gradual. It went from tens of thousands of spam messages a day to 900,000 to 1.1 million messages a day."

That volume was too much for the company's in-house email infrastructure. Its incoming T1 line and the HP ProLiant server running Microsoft Exchange 2003 and Symantec Brightmail™ AntiSpam software were both at about 98 percent capacity close to 23 hours a day, Wooster reports, and moving Symantec Brightmail to a second server didn't help. "Once we reached that 30 million messages volume, it would take anywhere from 6 to 23 hours for a valid message to be delivered," he says. "We simply did not have the bandwidth or the processing power to keep up with the incoming messages."

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**Joe Wooster**

Director of IT  
Adams Golf, Inc.

#### ORGANIZATION PROFILE

Adams Golf, Inc., ([www.adamsgolf.com](http://www.adamsgolf.com)) designs, assembles and markets premium golf clubs. Its Tight Lies Fairway Wood, with a low center of gravity and upside-down head, still has loyal users 10 years after its introduction. Today, Adams leads the industry in hybrid and hybrid iron set technology. The company has 155 employees, 125 of them at its Plano, Texas headquarters.

#### INDUSTRY

Manufacturing

#### SOLUTION

Messaging Management  
Messaging Security

## Symantec Hosted Mail Security blocks 102,000 instances of malware every month

### Impressed by service

With much of its business at a near-standstill, Wooster and his team sought out Web-hosted solutions that could get email back up and running quickly. He decided to try Symantec™ Hosted Mail Security, which provides spam filtering using Brightmail but as an Internet-based service, and was impressed with both the product and the service he received. There was an unseen hurdle yet to be cleared. Soon after deploying the solution, Adams Golf mail was backed up at the Symantec servers because the server at Adams Golf was still too busy to receive it. The problem was due to a firewall setting: though most mail was being filtered by Symantec's servers, Adams Golf was still able to receive mail directly to its server as well, so its servers were still dealing with a vast quantity of spam which was slowing everything down.

A Symantec support engineer recognized the problem and phoned Wooster on a Friday evening to let him know the company's email couldn't be delivered and why that was so. He suggested that Wooster change the firewall settings so all mail would route through Symantec Hosted Mail Security. "He took the time to go through the changes we had to make," Wooster says. "He called again over the weekend to make sure everything was back on track for the start of business Monday. The following week, everything returned to normal as soon as the queues flushed out." Wooster adds: "He went a long way with me, considering that at the time I was a client just using trial software."

### Hosting = savings

Before trying Symantec Hosted Mail Security, Wooster was reluctant to use hosted solutions. "One of the things I specialize in is cost control," he explains. "Nobody wants a forever-recurring cost. A capital expense that you can amortize over 36 months seems better because you can get a couple more years out of it."

Although faced with non-working email, Wooster still took a little time to compare the cost of hosted email security against

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## SOLUTION AT A GLANCE

### Key Challenges

- Restore non-working email
- Minimize risks of future mail performance issues
- Avoid purchase of additional hardware
- Free IT time spent filtering spam
- Control spam-related costs
- Protect network from malware

### Solution

Enabled hosted mail security, freeing hardware, bandwidth and staff time

### Symantec Products

Symantec™ Hosted Mail Security  
Symantec™ Endpoint Protection 11.0

### Technology Environment

- Email software: Microsoft Exchange Server 2003
- Email platform: HP ProLiant DL580 running Microsoft Windows Server 2003

### Service Availability

- Email service now reliable
- T1 line no longer overtaxed
- Almost 10 million spam messages blocked per month<sup>1</sup>
- 102,000 viruses blocked per month
- 6 to 23-hour email delays now eliminated

### Operational Efficiency/Cost Savings

- 7-14 hours staff time per week now available for more valuable uses
- Approximately \$20,000 annual labor cost avoidance<sup>2</sup>
- \$12,000 to \$14,000 hardware purchase cost avoidance
- 100% payback in 3 months due to efficiency gains

continuing with an in-house solution, and this time, the hosted solution turned out to be the less expensive option. Keeping mail in-house would have required the purchase of another server probably at around \$12,000 to \$14,000, plus a software license and support contract, he says. The company would also have had to increase its data line capacity, since the overloaded T1 line was the biggest cause of its mail slowdown.

But the much more significant cost was in labor. Wooster reports that before Symantec Hosted Mail Security, one of his IT staff spent 7 to 14 hours every week reviewing filtered mail for false positives, an estimated labor cost of \$20,000 a year.<sup>1</sup> “We set our suspected spam percentage level high, so we were filtering messages due to go to executives because of a bad keyword or some other reason. He spent a lot of hours a week filtering through the 100 to 150 users’ email in a centralized quarantine.” Because of the volume of spam messages, IT staff couldn’t take the risk of making changes to decentralize the quarantine, Wooster adds.

With Hosted Mail Security, the volumes are dramatically reduced and use of decentralized quarantines is now practical, so that users can check their own filtered spam for false positives. “If you do an analysis of what it would cost for a staff member to work an average 10 hours a week, then add hardware and software costs, and a support package, you have a really good justification for outsourcing this,” he says. He adds that Adams Golf’s investment in Symantec Hosted Mail Security, considering efficiency gains, paid for itself in about three months.

Of equal benefit is that Adams Golf now has more reliable email. “My largest fear is to have someone call the company, hear someone say, ‘The system’s slow again,’ or ‘The system’s down.’ That’s one thing I don’t ever want my users to have to say to a customer,” Wooster says. He used to get five to seven troubleshooting calls a day about spam-related issues. Now he gets none. “I

like 99.99 percent availability, 24 hours a day.”

In addition to Symantec Hosted Mail Security, Adams Golf uses Symantec™ Endpoint Protection 11.0 to keep its desktops and laptops safe from viruses and other malware. Although Symantec Endpoint Protection combines antivirus, antispyware, intrusion detection, firewall, and device and application control functions, Adams Golf is using it primarily for antivirus at this time.

With only a four-person IT department, Wooster especially appreciates the staff time that can now be devoted to more valuable uses—and the level of support—that he gains by using Symantec Hosted Mail Security. “The reduced administration time with the decentralized quarantine is a huge help from an IT perspective,” he says. “That and the superb support we got on the front end sold me on the product.”

Wooster adds that he’s found very few products to really impress him during his 17 years in IT. “I’m a very tough sell,” he says. “And I’m sold on Symantec Hosted Mail Security.”

1. Estimated 9.7 million spam messages= 13.7 million messages received at Adams Golf gateway\*71% of messages received at gateways typically are spam. (“Between July 1 and December 31, 2007, spam made up 71 percent of all email traffic monitored at the gateway.” Symantec Corporation: Symantec Global Internet Security Threat Report, Vol. 13, April, 2008, 8)

2. Based on one IT employee costing \$40/hour spending an average 10 hours per week on spam for 50 weeks per year.