

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



Pharma



The Challenge

The spam problem is especially dramatic for the pharmaceutical industry, not just because pharmaceutical themes are one of the most frequent advertorial email topics. Even the research and development division at Merz Pharma had to suffer from the ongoing annoyance. The spam and virus protection solution implemented previously by management was no longer capable of handling the problem, which had grown.

The Solution

In addition to comprehensive evaluation and filtering capabilities, server-sided operation and seamless integration in the Microsoft Exchange environment were key issues in the software selection process. "It was also important that our users had the ability to inspect filtered emails," continues Hess. "With any automated review process, there are always a number of messages that cannot be clearly identified as spam or not spam. To ensure that nothing important becomes suppressed, the mail recipient must be able to make the final decision, for example through inspection in a quarantine area or through notifications containing summaries of filtered emails."

The IT specialists at Merz Pharma determined that their extensive requirements could best be implemented with iQ.Suite from GROUP Business Software. "The ability to flexibly configure the rule-based framework and transparently review email processes from the administrator's console is impressive. The rapid implementation allowed us to quickly achieve a secure and efficient email communication process," comments Christoph Schneider, director data center/network at Merz Pharma.

At Merz Pharma, iQ.Suite operates entirely on the mail server without additional

"Until now, our email security process has focused on filtering email attachments for viruses," reports Alexander Hess, IT Administrator at Merz Pharma. "Spam mails in general don't have attachments, so our criteria were not suitable for sorting out advertorial messages. The analysis of an email's content is much more important to determining if the message should be intercepted as undesirable or delivered as important. Our previous solution didn't have the "special intelligence" provided by email security software."

deployment. Its modular architecture allows the Email Lifecycle Management solution to be easily tailored to meet the needs of increasing data volume and user numbers, and to be extended with additional functions for email security, management and archiving. These were important points for a multi-national firm like Merz Pharma, which has subsidiaries and locations in Europe and the US, as well as in Central and South America.

The company implemented iQ.Suite Wall for spam and content review and iQ.Suite Watchdog for virus and attachment checking. iQ.Suite Wall combines various approaches for analyzing messages for spam. In addition to list-based methods for spam identification which rely on examination of domain names and IP addresses of sending servers, text classification is a central feature. This function is based on CORE (Content Recognition Engine) technology, also developed by GROUP Business Software. It evaluates key phrases in mail text not just for frequency, but also separately analyzes emails by comparing them with representative examples of spam and "not-spam." Because in the end, the single fact that the phrase "medication" is used 10 times says nothing compelling about the quality of a message. It could still be purely

Merz Pharma with more than 1,000 employees worldwide is an innovative and international healthcare company bundling the activities of its three subsidiaries Merz Pharmaceuticals, Merz Consumer Care, and Merz Dental. The products offered range from prescription drugs and OTC products for health and wellness to materials for dentists and dental technicians. Merz Pharma is part of the Merz Group.

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an advertisement. To accomplish this accurate text classification, CORE relies on an algorithm named Support Vector Machines, one of today's most powerful technologies for content analysis.

"With iQ.Suite Wall we are also able to evaluate emails at a detailed level and to significantly reduce the number of false positives, or messages inadvertently identified as spam," explains Schneider.

iQ.Suite Watchdog leverages multiple approaches for virus defense as well, and in addition supports the simultaneous use of different virus scanners. A further feature that played an essential role in Merz Pharma's decision to use iQ.Suite was the ability to use "fingerprint" technology to examine attachments.

"This lets us clearly identify the true type of the attached file," says Hess. "Our users can be sure that an attachment appearing to be a text document really is a text

document, instead of a camouflaged, self-starting program that wreaks havoc." Using the "fingerprint" method, the dangerous time interval between virus infection and the availability of security updates from anti-virus solution providers can be bridged.

"Implementation was at the level of the SMTP service, and that went smoothly," remembers Hess. The integration of Microsoft's Active Directory with iQ.Suite also went without a hitch. The integration allows different security regulations to be setup, for example for groups or departments. The email communication of approximately 850 employees at Merz Pharma is now managed by iQ.Suite.

Merz Pharma uses an additional benefit of iQ.Suite. Based on the analysis of all incoming and outgoing emails by subsidiary, email traffic can be measured and assigned to appropriate cost centers.

Business Impact

The IT specialists at Merz Pharma are especially pleased with the flexibility of the rule-based framework for managing the filtering process, the informative administration console that makes processing steps re-constructible, and the ability of users to participate in the spam filtering process. The clear structure of the individual modules is also valued.

But at the end of the day, what really counts when it comes to annoying mail and digital

parasites are the numbers, and those can be clearly measured. Since the introduction of iQ.Suite, Merz Pharma has reduced the rate of spam going into user mailboxes by over 90%, and has nearly eliminated false positives altogether.

The enterprise now has its virus problem under control as well. The result is a trouble-free email business process and higher performance of the email infrastructure.

The Future

For its next steps, Merz Pharma plans to extend the email software to include solutions for legal disclaimers, encryption and archiving.

About GBS

GROUP Business Software is the leading provider of IBM Lotus based solutions and services in the fields of Cloud Computing, Email Management and Archiving, Instant Messaging Management, CRM, Workflow, Banking and Risk & Compliance.

Competencies

GBS solutions feature outstanding usability and unmatched efficiency. The necessary user interaction is reduced to a bare minimum. Centrally defined processes ensure compliance with corporate policies and statutory requirements.

Customers

GBS customers include well-known companies from all over the world, such as Deutsche Bank, Ernst & Young, Honda, Allianz and Miele.