



Holme Roberts & Owen

Customer profile

Denver-based law firm with attorneys in offices across North America and Europe

Industry

Legal services

IT environment

200+ attorneys and employees in multiple locations, many utilizing mobile devices

Challenges

Holme Roberts & Owen needed to reduce spam; eliminate the burden of spam management to the end-user; reduce attorney billable hours spent on spam management; and reduce IT administration costs

McAfee solution

- McAfee SaaS Email Protection (formerly MX Logic® Email Defense Service)

Results

- 20% increase in user productivity and fewer complaints about spam enables attorneys to maximize billable hours
- Increased bandwidth utilization and increased storage capacity
- With virtually no more spam and increased end-user controls, IT can spend more time on other technology projects

McAfee Helps Holme Roberts & Owen LLP Increase Productivity and Better Serve Its Clients by Reducing Email Threats

Holme Roberts & Owen LLP (HRO) is a Denver-based law firm with more than 200 attorneys in offices in Denver, Boulder, Colorado Springs, London, Munich, Salt Lake City and San Francisco. With a strong commitment to its legal work and to client service, HRO represents companies of all sizes and industries across the United States and in Europe in high profile lawsuits and business transactions. Established over a century ago, the firm is committed to serving its clients cost-effectively and efficiently, using advanced technology and networked computers to ensure seamless communication and resource-sharing between locations and staff members.

Unwanted email represented half of inbound message volume

The team at HRO understands the importance of prompt and effective communication—business depends on it. The company's attorneys work diligently to ensure that their clients receive premier legal counsel as well as top-notch client service through a variety of communication mediums, including email. Spam was a manageable problem in late 2002 and into 2003, and HRO attorneys were becoming more aware of how spam and spam-related problems were impacting businesses around the world. As the problem proliferated however, HRO users were being inundated with spam on a daily basis, with some staff members receiving up to 250 unsolicited emails a day. At the time, it was estimated that firm-unwanted email accounted for over half of HRO's incoming message volume.

To respond to the onslaught of junk email, HRO implemented a traditional anti-spam solution, with limited results. Users were expecting to be free of spam with the new solution, when in actuality the solution's heavy administration and ability to filter less than 20 percent of spam was not resolving the challenge. "Before we had a solution, HRO team members struggled to accept the problem," explains Dan Lissek, Information Technology Director. "But incorporating an inadequate solution was not acceptable—especially when our busy lawyers were wasting billable hours trying to determine what was legitimate email and what was spam."

With frustrations rising and productivity suffering as the spam problem and email volume escalated, HRO decided it was time to implement a more robust email defense solution. "We turned to McAfee because we needed a stronger defense," Lissek says. "The solution we were using wasn't coming close to solving our spam problem and was actually perpetuating the problem for our users, my IT staff and me."

The proof is in the analysis: a detailed report of email traffic and associated costs of spam

Frustrated with the poor performance and the administrative burden of its existing anti-spam solution, Lissek began researching other options. "I'm responsible for the technology systems at HRO and for ensuring that the entire team has communications tools that are as effective as possible," says Lissek. "It was clear to me that we needed a more powerful solution—one with a higher catch rate, far fewer instances of false positives, more end-user control and less IT administration."

After reviewing an online demonstration of McAfee products, Lissek had the company conduct a comprehensive Threat Assessment to analyze HRO's email traffic and uncover trends and data on spam, viruses, worms, offensive and unwanted content, and malicious attachments entering their network. This enabled HRO to analyze the spam problem in a report detailing the volume, type, and severity of threats detected by McAfee, and provided the company with estimates of the costs associated with these threats. After a week-long pilot that simply required HRO to point its MX record to McAfee, HRO made the switch to McAfee SaaS Email Protection. This service combines world-class anti-spam with industry-leading anti-virus, a strategy that helps ensure maximum virus protection from today's more destructive outbreaks.

Around-the-clock protection based on sophisticated and up-to-date technology

For Lissek, it was completely unacceptable for anyone at the law firm to spend valuable, billable time sifting through inappropriate, unsolicited junk mail to find and reply to important, time-sensitive messages. And, just one false positive (legitimate email marked as spam) could be devastating to the firm's client service efforts. With McAfee's easy-to-administer and -use, cost-effective service that provides around-the-clock email protection, malicious and unsolicited messages are automatically intercepted, analyzed and blocked at HRO's network perimeter. Using

its Stacked Classification Framework® spam detection system, which utilizes a patented method of identifying and controlling spam using a voting algorithm based on a sophisticated form of intelligent reasoning, McAfee achieves more than 99 percent accuracy.

Powering McAfee SaaS Email Protection is McAfee Labs, a sophisticated streaming data environment where McAfee monitors the global state of email communication, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and provides customers with real-time updates and protection. Led by email security experts with extensive experience in protecting messaging networks, McAfee Labs provides dynamic email defense—staying far ahead of the next attack by continually incorporating information about the latest spammer, virus and worm tactics.

Measurable employee productivity increase

The McAfee SaaS Email Protection solution allows HRO's attorneys and staff to spend more time handling client concerns, and less time trying to locate legitimate communication in a sea of junk email. HRO, with 500 mailboxes worldwide, was receiving about 20,000 messages per day—and over half of it was spam. Removing spam from the equation has increased employee productivity by almost 20 percent and has lessened the burden on network bandwidth by almost 80 percent. And, with about 160 employees using PDAs in addition to laptops and PCs, the elimination of spam was immediately apparent. "Spam is even harder to manage on a small, portable device like a PDA," Lissek explains. "So, it was a huge relief for users when they realized they no longer had to waste time wading through spam on a tiny screen."

Lissek is pleased not only with the solution's ability to eliminate spam, but also with its flexibility. Now, everyone at HRO has the option to review a Spam Quarantine Report and take action on the items filtered by the system—establishing more specific policies for future filtering at the employee level. "With McAfee, team members don't have to deal with spam at all—unless they want to," he says. "This is the perfect solution in a self-service society. Users can now be the final decision-maker in what

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Dan Lissek
Information Technology Director
Holme Roberts & Owen

they view as spam and what they don't. They can review the quarantine at their convenience and decide whether to delete, always allow, or always deny those messages in the future."

The intuitive, web-based Spam Quarantine Reporting also makes IT's job much easier at HRO. "Our team rarely receives complaints about spam anymore," says Lissek. "Using McAfee has made it possible for us to actually support and implement more important technology projects."

HRO maintains its first-class reputation and protects client business

The team at HRO has built its business reputation on providing first-class legal service and effective communication. "The essential challenge to a filtering methodology for a law firm is to distinguish the good from the bad," says Steve Blackwell, HRO's Executive Director. "Many client documents, court notices and filing deadlines are communicated electronically. Perhaps more than most businesses, we cannot afford to miss a legitimate, time-sensitive document. Our client's business and our firm's reputation are at risk if we make a mistake."

The McAfee SaaS Email Protection service ensures that only legitimate client information is delivered, so it can be reviewed and addressed by HRO in the most efficient manner. And with increased virus protection in addition to the comprehensive filtering technology, HRO has been successful in warding off many recent virus out-breaks. "The partners are extremely happy with the results," says Lissek. "And, I'm very satisfied with the entire solution—from features, to technical support, to reporting. I've already seen a clear return on our investment."

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