

## case study: managed security services

# Spam Removed From the Menu at United Community Bank

**Southeastern banking company puts a stop to time- and bandwidth-wasting spam and viruses through a network-based, managed service.**

### Company Background and Industry

United Community Bank (UCB) provides banking services to consumers and businesses in Georgia, western North Carolina, and eastern Tennessee. A successful regional player, the company has been rapidly expanding its holdings throughout the Southeastern area, growing from a single \$40 million bank to a \$5.8 billion, multi-bank holding company. United Community Bank has more than 90 offices offering deposit products, residential mortgages, commercial loans, and other loan services.

### Key Business Challenges

Spam, viruses, worms, and other malicious thieves of time and bandwidth challenge most businesses' quest for efficiency, and United Community Bank is no exception. Although the company has never had a security breach, spam was consuming a growing percentage of bandwidth, which hinders network performance and increases costs. And spam sometimes carries viruses and worms that can compromise network uptime and data integrity. So stopping attacks is a serious matter for UCB, as it is with all financial institutions. If customers lose confidence in a bank's data integrity, it would have an uphill struggle to rescue its reputation. United Community Bank's Vice President of Technology, Larry DesPres, realized he could go in one of two directions: he could set up his own in-house firewall, or he could outsource. The former would consume resources better used to support the company's mission to provide exceptional banking service. With the right vendor, the latter would provide the tools, expertise, and protection from technology obsolescence, all bundled into one managed service.

*United Community Bank's Vice President of Technology, Larry DesPres, says he considered an in-house e-mail filtering solution, but he realized Verizon Business "could do it better, faster, and cheaper."*

### The Solution

DesPres has a philosophy of selective outsourcing, so when Verizon Business proposed Managed Email with Anti-Spam, Anti-Virus and Content Control, he took note. As DesPres says, "We don't see it (e-mail management systems) as a core competency; our competency is banks, banking customers, and banking services." The offering uses Skeptic technology, powered by MessageLabs, to scan e-mail and help reduce viruses, spam, and other unwanted e-mails in the network, before they reach the end-user. Anti-Virus uses multiple commercial scanners and Skeptic's patented artificial intelligence to help detect viruses, known and unknown, before they reach the customer gateway. Anti-Spam uses a combination of Skeptic technology, public blacklists, and customer-customizable blacklists/whitelists to identify and re-route spam. Both services scan, block, and clear e-mails at the network level, before they reach desktops. Content Control intercepts inappropriate content sent and received by end-users by scanning

### United Community Bank Blairsville, Georgia

#### business challenges

- Stop spam and viruses before they reach the enterprise
- Improve network efficiency and employee productivity
- Enhance electronic communication

#### network solution

- Managed Email Content

#### business value

- **Optimize.** Spam, viruses, and unwanted content are stopped at the network level, freeing bandwidth.
- **Grow.** Resources are focused on business, not e-mail distractions.
- **Succeed.** Locking out spam and viruses helps lock in a reputation for data integrity.

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the subject, body, and attachments of user e-mails. DesPres, who deploys Verizon Business MultiProtocol Label Switching-based Private IP for branch networking, says he spoke to the systems team and said, "Here is what Verizon Business is proposing." Their response? "They were thrilled," he says.

### **Why Verizon Business?**

DesPres says he considered an in-house e-mail filtering solution, but he realized that "it would just consume someone to stay on top of it." Verizon Business, however, has the resources and expertise that companies can rely on. "We felt you could do it better, faster, and cheaper than us," says DesPres. Verizon Business has leveraged relationships with companies such as MessageLabs to bolster its key product components, leading to an industry-leading SLA for detection of known and unknown viruses. The service requires no additional hardware, software, upgrades, or patches, and it eliminates the burden of managing and updating virus signature files.

### **Results and Next Steps**

UCB runs a lean IT department, so a managed service was a perfect fit. With Managed Email Content, UCB has removed the expense and headaches of developing and managing e-mail protection in-house. And the initiative has realized immediate success. Two days after implementation, DesPres found that a significant percentage of incoming e-mail was spam. Now that the threat of spam and viruses has been greatly reduced, UCB can keep its focus on the customer—and on continued growth throughout the Southeast.

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