



**We estimate significant annual savings through the elimination of end users and the IT department having to deal with spam and viruses. When the cost savings and efficiency gains are compiled, Avnet projects 100 percent return on investment in less than a year.**



**BILL SMATHERS**

Director of Enterprise Security Services  
*Avnet, Inc.*



**Fortune 500 Distributor of Electronic Components and Computer Products Secures its Email with IronPort Systems**

**SITUATION**

Avnet, Inc. (NYSE:AVT) is one of the world's largest distributors of electronic components and computer products and is ranked number 217 on the list of Fortune 500 companies. Protecting the company's employees from adult content, its Microsoft Exchange servers from spam, and its entire infrastructure from viruses, while also reducing productivity losses and potential liability were some of Avnet's goals when it selected the IronPort C-Series™ email security appliance to protect its network.

Today, by Avnet's most conservative calculations, IronPort's solution is saving over \$715,884 per year in lost productivity alone. The successful implementation by the messaging team has been noted both by its executives and employees.

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**AVNET AT A GLANCE**

Headquarters: Phoenix, AZ  
Locations: 268 locations in more than 40 countries  
Services: Distribution of electronic components and computer products, supply chain management, engineering, technical, marketing and financial services  
Employees: Approximately 10,000

**THE IRONPORT ADVANTAGE**

- High capture rate, with zero false positives
- No need for quarantine servers
- Reduced legal liability
- Rapid ROI: most conservative internal estimate of \$715,884 in annual savings
- Virus prevention and protection



## TECHNICAL CHALLENGES

Avnet had four different constituencies for the IronPort solution: employees, managers, legal and human resource professionals and technical staff.

Everyone wanted to avoid false positives. "Email is mission critical and we needed a solution that erred on the side of minimal false positives," says Bill Smathers, Director of Enterprise Security Services at Avnet.

The second major issue was virus prevention. Avnet already had anti-virus defenses in place at the gateway, its Microsoft Exchange servers, and the desktop. But it had no zero-hour defenses.

## THE IRONPORT SOLUTION

Today, two redundant IronPort appliances monitor more than two million email messages for Avnet each week, and more than 60 percent of these messages are deleted as spam.

### Proving "Filter Integrity"

Critical to the success of the Avnet installation is IronPort's low false positive rate. "We understood the trade off between a high capture rate and a low false positive rate," Smathers explains. "But we did not want to build an end user interface into the infrastructure to support quarantine servers."

Initially, not everyone in the company was willing to forego a user interface into the quarantined email. But, after demonstrating continuous operation with no false positives, Avnet became convinced they could eliminate this requirement. "Once we showed no false positives, employees were able to accept the integrity of the filter," Smathers says. The lesson here, he continues, is that "administrators should no longer assume there is a need to provide end user access to the quarantined email."

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## ROI

The second major success of the Avnet installation was in the clear demonstration of rapid ROI. The value in reducing liabilities associated with adult content spam and potential claims of a hostile workplace environment is hard to measure. For the human resources and legal departments, it was simply something that had to be done.

But the productivity savings are quite clear. Smathers notes that a recent study by the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center at the University of Texas estimated the cost of spam in lost productivity is \$1 per unwanted message.

Avnet has a weekly inbound traffic volume of 2.5 million messages. By that estimate, with over half of those messages being deleted as spam, Avnet is saving in excess of 1 million dollars per week. While Smathers admits that may not be entirely tenable, there is no question about significant and rapid payback. "If we assume a fully loaded cost of \$20 per employee per hour, and that it takes only one second to delete each message, we save \$13,767 in productivity per week, or \$715,884 per year," Smathers says. "If the cost per spam message is even 1/2 cent, we have payback in less than a year."



**IRONPORT™**

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## ABOUT IRONPORT SYSTEMS

IronPort Systems is the leading email security products provider for organizations ranging from small businesses to the Global 2000. The company has developed a family of email security appliances, the IronPort C-Series™, that offer breakthrough performance, multi-layer protection, and best-of-breed options. IronPort is driving new standards and providing innovative products for those faced with the monumental task of managing, protecting, and growing mission-critical email systems. For more information on IronPort products and services, visit: [www.ironport.com](http://www.ironport.com)