AppAnalyzer
Helps Avoid Trading Losses by Protecting Confidential Data

Deregulation dramatically changed the nation's energy industry, creating a new, competitive era in which utility companies' shares became high-profile stocks. Being part of a volatile market opened utility companies to a wide range of risks—and one of the greatest dangers is an unscrupulous or careless employee leaking confidential information. When privileged, the information could expose a company's trading strategy, running the risk of serious losses.

A major Southwestern utility company is protecting itself against this risk with Sirana's AppAnalyzer for Exchange (AppAnalyzer), which scans Exchange e-mail searching for specified keywords and domains. Any e-mail message with sensitive keywords, such as "confidential," can immediately be identified and investigated. By automating information collection, AppAnalyzer has saved the company's Exchange administrator 15 hours of work weekly and reduced the number of user complaints by more than 50 percent.

Customer Profile

Industry
A large Southwestern U.S. public utility company with hundreds of thousands of customers and a large natural gas pipeline. (The company has asked to remain anonymous.)

Business Situation
When the utility company relied exclusively on built-in Exchange tools, it was difficult to determine what kind of resources were needed and who needed them. The Exchange administrator was kept busy responding to complaints from users—often that they had run out of storage space. The lack of built-in Exchange monitoring capabilities meant that the administrator had no way of keeping an eye on employees using e-mail for personal activities or, even more importantly, protecting confidential information.

Solution

Benefits
The company now protects its assets and prevents security breaches by monitoring the flow of information through its Exchange servers. In addition, the Exchange administrator now can easily access reports providing a complete picture of e-mail system utilization. This information helps the administrator allocate resources efficiently and has greatly reduced the number of user complaints.

Product
Sirana's AppAnalyzer for Exchange

SIRANA
software

"Of course, we can never fully eliminate problems because space and bandwidth are limited, but by making it possible to proactively allocate resources throughout the organization, AppAnalyzer has great reduced the number of complaints and requests. This is a great product that has made my life much easier!"

—Exchange administrator for a large Southwestern utility company

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Getting Proactive

The utility company over 3,000 mailboxes on six servers at three locations. "As our traffic volume grew, it became obvious that we needed to get a better handle on where the traffic was coming from so we could manage our resources in a proactive manner as opposed to just throwing additional resources at problems as they arise," the Exchange administrator said.

"In the past, nearly every day, I received complaints from users who had exceeded their storage limits," the administrator said. The administrator was already using NetIQ's AppManager for Microsoft Exchange Server, but the product did not provide the additional drill-down he needed to solidify his confidence in the Exchange environment. AppAnalyzer provides comprehensive data on Exchange servers located throughout an enterprise, including message traffic analysis, message delivery times, historical and current mailbox and public folder storage data, chargeback information and message content notification.

He noted that some of this information could be obtained with existing Exchange tools but that AppAnalyzer provides a far more comprehensive and accessible information set. "I obtained a demo copy and discovered that, yes, it really does what it claims to do. When I explained the benefits to my management, I had no difficulty convincing them to purchase the product."

Meeting Demands of Heavy E-mail Users

"I run a series of AppAnalyzer reports every day that helps me stay on top of what's happening with our e-mail system," the administrator said. "The first report that I began using regularly shows e-mail traffic volume by user. I was surprised to discover that many of the people that I thought were heavy e-mail users weren't, while other users, who I never would have expected, were the top senders and receivers. The heavy users of e-mail for legitimate business purposes turned out to be scattered in different departments from the top to the bottom of the company and would have been impossible to identify any other way.

"This report made it easy to determine which users needed extra storage space and provide it to them without allocating space across the board to users who will never make use of it," the administrator said. "I increased the mailbox sizes of the users with the greatest traffic requirements and before long the number of calls from users complaining that their mailbox was full plummeted."

Avoiding Loss of Confidential Information

"One of the most valuable reports sorts attachments sent and received by file extension, making it easy to identify employees who are clogging up the company mail system by sending MP3 or video files," the administrator said. "Another important report scans e-mail for keywords that I have specified in advance. Some keywords are designed to identify mail on forbidden subjects, such as pornography or gambling, while others are designed to flag confidential information. Another report identifies mail that is sent to or received from Internet domains that we have flagged. We use this report primarily to ensure that our employees are not sharing information with competitors."

Tracking Traffic Over Time to Avoid Conflicts

The administrator was surprised to discover that the e-mail system received heavy volumes of traffic even during the weekend. The reports showed that the daily backup of the Exchange server had been scheduled during a heavy traffic period. The administrator moved the backup to occur three hours earlier when traffic was much lighter, significantly improving the message delivery times during the backup period.

"With AppAnalyzer I can respond to long-term trends according to my own schedule rather than having to deal with problems one by one as they arise," he said. "This approach saves me a lot of time, easily 15 hours per week. Even better is the fact that the number of user complaints related to Exchange has fallen drastically."