

The Organization

St. Louis College of Pharmacy
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Founded in 1864, St. Louis College of Pharmacy® is the oldest pharmacy college west of the Mississippi River. The college offers a six-year curriculum leading to a Pharm. D. (Doctorate of Pharmacy). Enrollment is over 1,200 students, who are issued college-supplied notebook computers and email accounts. The college uses SonicWALL® Email Security (SES) software to protect the email of 1,500 students, faculty and staff.

SonicWALL spoke with Chad Shepherd, Chief Information Officer at St. Louis College of Pharmacy, about the email security challenges he confronts at the college, and how he has applied SES to resolve those challenges.

Q.: *What unique security issues are colleges facing today in regard to email?*

A.: Email is the method of choice these days for spammers and hackers as a vector into your network. Historically, a lot of higher education institutions haven't managed that well, so it's always a challenge. I hear my peers complain about it. The sheer volume of spam that gets into networks is just astronomical.

Q.: *What have you done to address email protection at the college?*

A.: We deployed SonicWALL Email Security software as a gateway email security appliance. SonicWALL lets us scan and control both inbound and outbound email traffic. Outbound protection is real important to make sure that things that are not college-originated are blocked, and that no other unauthorized mail originates from our institution. No email comes in or goes out of our environment in any shape or fashion except through the SonicWALL gateway.

Q.: *Why did you originally choose SES for email protection?*

A.: I know we also looked at Barracuda Networks® and others. Our primary reason for choosing SonicWALL at the time was its superior spam filtering and ease-of-management, and its price point was really good, too.

Q.: *How has SES made your IT team more productive?*

A.: From a staffing perspective we're not dealing as much with spam or other email-based attacks. It's very quick and easy for us to set up filters based upon groups and user types. We like that end users can manage their own tolerance for spam without our intervention. On the other hand, our help desk technicians can easily view a user's spam mailbox to see that everything is set up correctly. We also like the automated notification to let us know if we're getting directory harvest or other types of attacks.

Q.: *Can you give us an example of how SES has worked for the college?*

A.: Well, we have a threshold set that if someone tries to send a certain number of emails within a couple minutes, we throttle that account and receive an automatic notification. Recently, we had a user fall prey to a phishing attack that gathered her username and password, and the hackers tried to connect to send outbound emails. We were automatically alerted and logged in to find that SonicWALL stopped 150,000 hacker emails from going out. That got us out of a big pinch.

St. Louis College of Pharmacy Case Study

“Whatever the size of your organization, if you’re not leveraging solutions like SES that let you protect your systems while minimizing head count, you probably don’t deserve a leadership job in the technology arena.”

–Chad Shepherd
Chief Information Officer
St. Louis College of Pharmacy

Q.: How has SES improved your bottom line?

A.: We run the statistical reporting provided with SES. I use it to calculate return on investment. Frankly, less than 20 percent of our incoming email is legitimate. If that had to go to our mail server and people actually had to deal with those, it would cost a considerable amount in resource hours. It’s not only paying salary for IT staff to deal with the problem, it’s also the hundreds of hours lost by employees sifting through spam. SES protects us from damage by phishing and other email-based attacks by identifying and stopping abnormal activity. Statistically year-to-year, SonicWALL Email Security has saved us tens of thousands of dollars.

Q.: What advice do you have for other professionals looking for a similar solution?

A.: SonicWALL has really good management tools for email security. We’re a small institution, so we really never have the dedicated head count to really address security as thoroughly as institutions with a larger technical staff. But whatever the size of your organization, if you’re not leveraging solutions like SES that let you protect your systems while minimizing head count, you probably don’t deserve a leadership job in the technology arena.

Case Study Solution Spotlight

SonicWALL Email Security

SonicWALL Email Security is a self-running, self-updating solution, delivering powerful protection against spam, virus and phishing attacks in addition to preventing confidential information leaks and violation of internal email policy and regulatory compliance laws. Available as a hardened appliance or as Windows software, SonicWALL Email Security protects inbound and outbound email for organizations from 10 to over 100,000 users.

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