



Vircom solves mail-overload problem at Eastex.net

Eastex.net has a long history as one of the first telephone cooperatives to be established in the US. Today, it is among the largest ISPs in Texas, serving 11 counties. In 2001, the company expanded to include both Internet connection and managed email services to a range of residential and corporate customers, and today has 18,000 active modusMail accounts.

The Challenge

In 2006, Eastex was using a single modusMail™ server to host email for approximately 13,000 users. As the business grew, so did the pressure on the server: more users meant more spam. High traffic levels resulted in a growing backlog of hundreds of thousands of messages queued for delivery, causing a complete disruption of mail flow. Their System Administrator, Mike McTee, received multiple complaints from customers which, in turn, resulted in a loss of business. This critical situation prompted Mr. McTee to call Vircom's specialized support team to help clear out the backlog.

The first step was to impose strict security measures to reduce the incoming spam, but it also became clear that their network required redundancy. Having a single point of failure meant that messages could be lost if the situation reoccurred.

The Journey

The recovery project, headed by chief Vircom security expert, Yves Lacombe, required an on-the-spot solution. Vircom takes all issues affecting customers very seriously and will go above and beyond to provide viable solutions to any problem. In this case, Vircom lent Eastex a modusGate™ solution to run in front of the modusMail™ server, to filter out the majority of spam and reduce the load on modusMail™. modusGate™ immediately filtered out 75% of the incoming traffic (two-thirds of which was blocked at connection and the rest was quarantined). The remaining 25% then passed to modusMail™, which was now configured with aggressive anti-spam parameters. At this point, a further 50% of the messages were rejected as spam. In the end, only 12.5% of the total mail flow was deemed legitimate and delivered to the end users.

This emergency deployment alleviated the server and provided effective email filtering and delivery. For Eastex, it proved to be a highly successful solution to a critical situation. There was, however, one more issue that Eastex needed to address: create a redundant deployment to prevent a repeat of this situation.



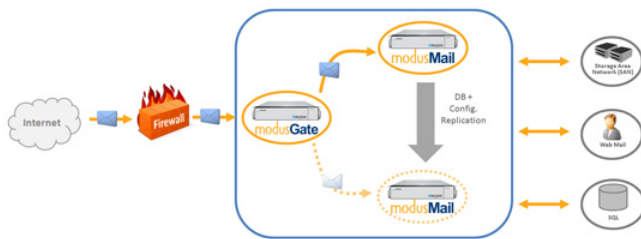
“Vircom never hesitated in doing whatever it took to help with the issues we were encountering, even to the point of lending us a modusGate™, configuring everything and creating a custom solution that, to this day, handles our email load very well.”

Mike McTee
Internet Systems Administrator
Eastex.net

The Solution

Eastex had been running modusMail™ on a Windows® 2000 server, and over time its performance diminished. They had already begun making infrastructure changes, including acquiring a more robust Windows 2003 server. They also purchased the borrowed modusGate™, as it had proven to be indispensable. With these elements in place, Yves Lacombe and his team proposed a new deployment scenario to permanently resolve their issues.

Vircom installed modusMail™ on the new server and migrated all the data from the old server with no interruption of service. The old server was reconfigured and modusMail™ was reinstalled. The two modusMail servers were then positioned behind the modusGate™, thus creating a redundant blockade. (Figure 1.)



The Result

As with most businesses, keeping up with growth requires constant adjustments to the infrastructure and increased demands on resources and employee time. More often than not, issues are only tackled when they become critical. In Eastex's case, their crisis came when the mail server could no longer handle the increase in traffic.

Deployment: Vircom created a custom deployment solution for Eastex and put an end to their backlog problems. Effective email filtering increased the quality of their service, resulting in a steep decline in customer complaints. The new configuration also proved to be a major time-saver for the IT team: they no longer had to tinker with the mail server to keep it running.

Vircom's Professional Services: For Mike McTee, the support from Yves Lacombe and the Vircom team was the key to relieving the traffic overload that besieged and threatened his business. Vircom's specialized customer-centric services are an integral part of the company ethics. As McTee highlights, "This is a highly customized set-up, but it's one that could be readily put into place in any company, with the expert help provided by Vircom...I would highly recommend all of Vircom's support team. I've worked closely with several of their guys and they are very knowledgeable."

About Vircom

Vircom Inc., based in Montreal, is a privately held software development and professional services company focused exclusively on email messaging security. Founded in 1994, Vircom is the only email security vendor to offer a wide range of deployment options, proprietary anti-spam technology, complete Windows® infrastructure integration, and premium customer service. Its award-winning products include modusMail™, modusGate™ and modusGate™ Appliance. Vircom's technology is utilized by several major security providers and deployed through third-party vendors to customers in more than 100 countries.

About Eastex

The parent company, Eastex Telephone Cooperative, Inc; began forming in 1950 due to a reluctance from existing telephone companies to provide telephone service to the rural customers in the area. A loan from the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) enabled the cooperative to be formed and in 1952, Eastex Telephone Cooperative began providing telephone service to 204 customers. Eastex Telephone has since grown to 21 exchanges serving approximately 30,000 telephone customers in 11 counties of rural East Texas. In 1999, Eastex Net, a subsidiary company of Eastex Telephone Coop was formed out of a need for Internet access which many of the cooperative customers did not have available in their areas. In 1999, Eastex Net was able to make Dial-up access, Email, and Web services quickly followed by DSL access available to the majority of Eastex Telephone customers. To this day, Eastex Net continues to grow and it is through a collaborative effort with companies such as Vircom that Eastex was able to provide much needed services to the rural East Texas area.



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