

Case Study: CATV Operator and ISP Deploys *matriXscan APEX* with *CommTouch Global View Mail Reputation and Anti-Spam Technology*

"Transparent" Anti-SPAM Measures Requires No Modifications to the Current Email System

Troubled by a rapid increase in the number of SPAM email messages, Mediatti Communications, Inc., a Multiple Systems Operator servicing seven CATV systems across Japan carefully researched and compared various anti-SPAM products available in the market, and selected "matriXscan APEX," an anti-SPAM appliance by imatrix Corporation that incorporates CommTouch GlobalView™ Mail Reputation and Anti-Spam. This article examines the reasoning behind the Mediatti's decision and its effectiveness.

Rapid Increase in SPAM Email Raised Concern for Delays in Legitimate Email Deliveries

As a Multiple Systems Operator, Mediatti Communications, Inc. provides its affiliate Japanese CATV systems with support services such as consolidated call-center operations, integrated accounting and customer management systems, joint purchasing of equipment and programs, and integrated marketing activities. The company also transmits a multiple-channel broadcast program called "Mediatti TV," and supplies high-speed Internet service, "Mediatti NET" for its affiliate CATV station subscribers.

While providing these services, a problem emerged -- Mediatti began receiving complaints from an increasing number of Mediatti NET users who were unhappy about the



Mediatti Communications, Inc.
Headquarters ● Minato-ku, Tokyo, Japan
President/CEO ● Ken Masunaga
Established ● March 25, 1997
Capital ● 9,989,137,300 yen
Service offerings include CATV systems support, high-speed internet service "MediattiNET" and multi-channel broadcast "MediattiTV."

excessive amount of SPAM email they were receiving. Ms. Rina Suzuki, Mediatti's Information Technology manager, commented, "We have supplied an optional email filtering service to our customers. However, the filter alone was not good enough to prevent the recent flood of SPAM email messages from reaching our customers."

If this situation had remained unchecked, the users' dissatisfaction would have continued, and the company's email system load would have increased due to increased need for error response handling of bounced SPAM email, causing possible delays in legitimate email deliveries. Mediatti embarked on its search for a new anti-SPAM measures.

Prerequisite: No Modification to Current Email Configuration

Unfortunately, Mediatti could not simply add a new software or appliance product to the existing email system in order to strengthen their anti-SPAM capabilities. As Ms. Suzuki commented, Mediatti already had an email filtering service in place. Adding another layer of product could inconvenience their users with another SPAM mailbox or by having to alter the way they access their email services.

In addition, a large-scale change in their email system configuration would require a large investment of money and time, for system design all the way through reliability tests.

"Mediatti's email service lets the SMTP server query the LDAP server for each

user's email settings to determine, for each user, things like which filtering rules must be used and if a virus-check must also be performed. We could not throw away this mechanism in order to add a new anti-SPAM measure," said Ms. Suzuki.

For these reasons, Mediatti looked into, and evaluated, available anti-SPAM products in the market which would "collaborate with our existing mail filtering service, without requiring us to modify our email system infrastructures." (Ms. Suzuki) One of the products Mediatti looked at was imatrix Corporation's matriXscan APEX anti-SPAM appliance which incorporates CommTouch GlobalView Mail Reputation and Anti-Spam technology. This product was recommended to Mediatti by their IT system integration partner, Terlogy Co., Ltd.

Terlogy Co., Ltd. has been watching matriXscan APEX with keen interest for quite some time because Terlogy believed that today's email users need a high-speed anti-SPAM solution which can be deployed without having to modify their existing email system configurations. The matriXscan APEX was the solution Terlogy found in the market that satisfies these requirements.

Mr. Takemasa Yamamoto, market development director at imatrix, describes the product's advantages: "matriXscan APEX is an in-memory anti-SPAM appliance which is completely transparent to SMTP sessions. It applies no changes to any email messages passing through, meaning that this solution can be deployed without ever modifying current email system configurations." (See Figure 1)

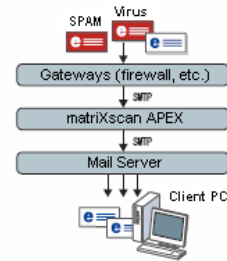
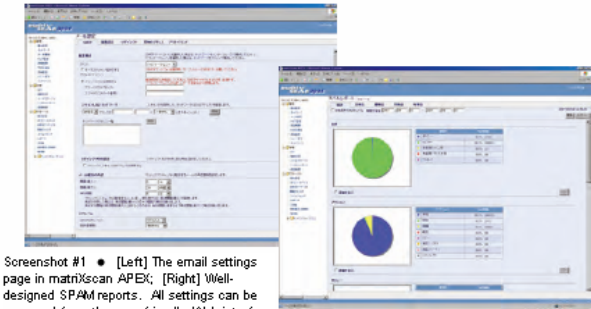


Figure 1 ● An example of matriXscan APEX implementations. The transparent nature of the anti-SPAM appliance provides many benefits.



Screenshot #1 ● [Left] The email settings page in matriXscan APEX; [Right] Well-designed SPAM reports. All settings can be managed from the user-friendly Web interface.

The transparent nature also provides an added benefit of eliminating email delivery responsibilities because it does not spool email messages. While other typical anti-SPAM appliances in the market spool email messages internally, risking losing them in case of a system failure, matriXscan APEX presents no such risk.

The processing speed is yet another advantage. Because matriXscan APEX scans email completely in-memory, it can process much faster than other products which require email spooling onto a hard-disk drive.

Furthermore, matriXscan APEX provides a mechanism which improves SPAM email recognitions. It automatically obtains, in real-time, the latest SPAM information from the CommTouch Global Detection Center so that it can quickly respond even to the latest spamming techniques that spammers come up with.

Excellent SPAM Detection Accuracy and Reliable Performance Resulted

After carefully examining and comparing anti-SPAM solutions from several different suppliers, Mediatti selected matriXscan APEX, which was then deployed in November 2007. Mediatti is currently operating the matriXscan APEX in two configurations: (1) the SMTP server and the matriXscan APEX placed behind, and managed by, the load-balancer, and (2) the matriXscan APEX placed in between the load-balancer and the SMTP server.

Mr. Suzuki said, "Both operating patterns required no modifications to our existing

system configurations. We just had to connect the matriXscan APEX appliance, and performed a few simple operations on its GUI to set up communication with the LDAP server. It only took us about half a day." What Mr. Suzuki mentioned is yet another outstanding feature of matriXscan APEX, the easy-to-use Graphical User Interface. (See Screenshot #1)

After implementing the matriXscan APEX, Mediatti conducted a month-long trial. "We obtained excellent results in all areas including performance, reliability and accuracy of SPAM detection," Mr. Suzuki appraises the product very highly.

'I receive less SPAM' - Users Send Thank You Emails

Mediatti is currently offering its customers a service called "SPAM email mark-up service." This optional service, implemented by the matriXscan APEX, appends distinct strings to email headers -- "[SPAM]" for definite and "[SUSPECT]" for suspected SPAM email messages, allowing each customer to choose an action to be applied, whether to receive the marked email along with others, automatically move them into a designated Web mail folder, or automatically delete them.

This service is highly appreciated by the Mediatti customers. "After the matriXscan APEX deployment, SPAM-related customer complaints were dramatically reduced. We actually received compliments from our customers who are happy about receiving fewer SPAM email messages which enhanced their productivity," said Mr. Suzuki.

Additional Features to Enhance Mediatti NET Services

The matriXscan APEX also provided Mediatti with unexpected benefits. Mr. Suzuki said, "(The matriXscan APEX's) alert feature is allowing us to monitor in real-time the current email transaction volume and the SPAM ratio. We can leverage such objective and quantitative information to fine-tune our email system as well as to improve the level of services offered throughout Mediatti NET."

Mediatti is considering the possibility of expanded utilization of the matriXscan APEX to manage their email infrastructures, for example, applying anti-SPAM measures on outgoing messages as well as incoming, and expanding resources in accordance with an increased email server load.

Contacts

imatrix

imatrix Corporation
TEL: +81-44-272-6771
URL: <http://www.imatrix.co.jp>
E-Mail: sales@imatrix.co.jp

commtouch®

Real Security. In Real Time.
CommTouch
US Tel. 650-864-2114
Int'l Tel. +972-9-863-6818
URL: <http://www.commtouch.com>
E-Mail: bizdev@commtouch.com