# Virus/Spam Filtering

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## Virus Filtering

A generally accepted estimate is that about 99.8% of all computer virus infections come from e-mail. Our experience indicates that between one and two percent of all e-mail is infected.

The computer industry has developed two approaches to virus filtering: one at the PC level and one at the enterprise level.

PC-level protection requires that you install and maintain virus prevention software on every PC. The advantage of this solution is that it not only protects against e-mail infection but also infection from floppy disks, FTP files, etc. However, this approach can also be expensive and very difficult to maintain. The problem is keeping every PC updated. A user may opt to buy virus protection software but end up not keeping it up to date with the latest "signature files," which describe new viruses.

The second approach is to install an enterprise e-mail filter, which looks at all of the e-mail going to one or more e-mail servers. WVNET is currently running this type of virus filtering. The way virus filtering is done on an enterprise server is that each message is broken apart (decoded); the individual files are scanned and removed if infected (or disinfected, if possible); and the message is re-created and sent on its way.

WVNET filters all e-mail coming to any of our e-mail domains (currently about 20). WVNET is also filtering e-mail for the Department of Education, West Liberty State College, Glenville State College, and Bluefield State College, West Virginia Treasurer's Office, and AEL.

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The enterprise e-mail filter provided by WVNET protects an institution/agency from external virus infection. It does not protect against infection of one internal user by another internal user. To protect against this type of problem requires the redirecting of internal mail to WVNET for filtering. If you are interested in this additional level of protection, WVNET staff can discuss the pros and cons with you.In the case of the Department of Education, we are filtering e-mail for about 800 K-12 schools. An enterprise e-mail filter has the advantage that it can be maintained at one location, and it protects against the source of approximately 99.8% of all viruses. The virus filtering software we use has been recognized as one of the best available. We get updated virus signatures for any new viruses every hour. Since we started running this product, we have discovered that by the time the press is discussing a virus or we get a warning from the state, we have already been filtering the virus.There is nothing wrong with using both approaches (i.e., both desktop and enterprise filtering). In fact, many experts recommend that you do this for those administrative PCs over which you have greater control.

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# SPAM Filtering

WVNET has discovered that more than half of all e-mail coming to our e-mail server is unsolicited advertising called "SPAM." This flood of unwanted e-mail is not just annoying for the user — it also places a heavy burden on e-mail servers, which handle all of the mail. By putting in place SPAM filters, WVNET has cut the traffic to our e-mail server in half.

One problem with SPAM filtering is that although most users love to have you remove SPAM, there are a few users who want to receive some SPAM. One person's SPAM is another person's favorite e-mail. WVNET does maintain a list of "good" SPAM sites. For example, the Powerball Lottery can e-mail you the latest winning numbers. This was originally flagged by our filter as being SPAM. As soon as we were told that users wanted this e-mail, that they had signed up to receive it, and that the Lottery e-mail server wasn't being used for other SPAM, we exempted the lottery site from the SPAM filter. We are always willing to look at particular e-mail

servers and exempt them, as long as they are not being used to flood SPAM to the majority of users.

# Benefits

- Enjoy professional management of an enterprise-wide filtering solution for SPAM and viruses. This includes constantly updated virus signatures and dynamic access to multiple major SPAM-source databases — all for one low budgeted cost and with no additional load on your staff. We can do some customization of the SPAM filter depending on your needs.
- Save approximately half of your mail server's capacity by preventing SPAM from ever reaching your server. This avoids unnecessary e-mail server upgrades and reduces the size of mail systems backups.
- Improve user productivity by reducing or eliminating the time spent every day separating the useful correspondence from the useless clutter.
- Create a more wholesome educational environment through the reduction or elimination of salacious solicitations.
- Close the source of as much as 99.8% of the viruses in your organization's computers. This reduces the load on your support services, improves user productivity, protects your intellectual property and administrative resources, and facilitates secure collaboration and information sharing within your campus communities.

# Pricing

Our pricing varies depending on how many accounts you have. The prices range from $1,500/year for less than 250 accounts up to $7,500/year for 2,501- 5,000 accounts. If you would have more than 5,000 accounts, you will need to contact the WVNET business office for more information but we will negotiate a fair price depending on the numbers of messages per day, the size of the average message, and the number of email accounts involved. You can find a complete breakdown of this pricing on our Schedule of Rates.

For more information, please contact our Business Office.