

The battle against spam starts at the gateway to your business's network. **Ian Parsons** tests the latest technology that can catch it before it gets in

Think of email and, inevitably, spam rears its ugly head. With spam a high percentage of all email, it is an issue that cannot be ignored. But in all the rush to protect our companies from spam, it is all too easy to forget the other, potentially more damaging, uses of email.

These include liability for offensive messages, managing the risk of leaked corporate secrets and the ever-present threat of email viruses.

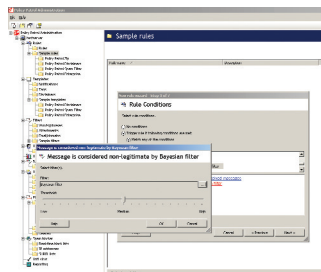
In a similar way to web filtering products, email content filters monitor ingoing and outgoing emails and block

those that do not meet an acceptable use policy.

For this group test, we selected 16 products designed to enforce corporate email policies. Some detect and block spam, while others enforce company-specific acceptable usage policies.

Policy Patrol Email Filter Enterprise Edition

Version 3.5
Supplier Red Earth Software
Price \$1,795 for 100 users
Contact www.redearthsoftware.com



Policy Patrol is designed to work with Microsoft's Exchange or Lotus's Domino servers. Management is performed through an MMC snap-in and looks similar to the console for MIMESweeper.

Rules are built in a similar way, too. Components of rules, including filters, users and actions, are used to build new rules.

For example, once the components had been created, we managed to create a new rule that blocked all outgoing emails that contained words relating to our "Top secret" project.

From this point of the view, the software is incredibly simple to use. But while creating the occasional rule like this is fine for company-specific rules, blocking spam needs to be a little smarter. This is where the Bayesian filtering comes in.

This rule uses real emails – legal ones in an allowed list, spam in a blocked list – to scan email and give it a probability rating that it is spam.

All you have to do is choose the threshold value.

The software comes with more than 3,000 spam emails in the blocked list, but it does need you to fill in the allowed list. Fortunately, it is easy to create a rule to add all sent mail, which shouldn't be spam, to the allowed list. You can also add detected spam back into the filter, so that it learns. Using a similar premise, you can configure a new email address that users can send spam too, so you have human eyes improving your spam filtering.

Policy Patrol can also be set for realtime blocking using the lists provided by Spamhaus.org.

But it's not just a product concerned with blocking spam. It can also be used to reinforce company policy and rescue bandwidth. For

example, you can compress all attachments over a certain size, and add signatures to all outgoing emails.

Policy Patrol is clearly one of the most powerful tools on test here. The Bayesian filters get better with use and also take into account legitimate mail, while the support for virus scanners and email policy enforcement mean it is much more than a simple spam filter.

SC MAGAZINE RATING

Features	★★★★★
Ease of use	★★★★☆
Performance	★★★★☆
Documentation	★★★★☆
Support	★★★★☆
Value for money	★★★★☆
OVERALL RATING	★★★★☆

FOR Spam filter adapts and learns using your emails.
AGAINST Base spam filter needs fine tuning and populating with email to work correctly.
VERDICT With the proper time devoted to populating the allowed and spam lists, it is one of the most powerful content filters.



Policy Patrol is clearly one of the most powerful content filters.

Ian Parsons

Red Earth Software LLC 200 Marcy Street Portsmouth, NH 03801 United States Toll-free: 1-800-921-8215 Tel: (603) 436 1319 Fax: (603) 457 8455 Email: sales@redearthsoftware.com http://www.redearthsoftware.com	Red Earth Software (UK) Ltd 20 Market Place Kingston-upon-Thames Surrey KT1 1JP United Kingdom Tel: +44-(0)20-8605 9074 Fax: +44-(0)20-8605 9075 Email: sales@redearthsoftware.co.uk http://www.redearthsoftware.com
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