

# INFO WORLD

E - P R I N T

## INTRANETS & I-COMMERCE

### ► E-mail management software

# Monitor Exchange's exchanges

## ■ Affordable anti-spam, content filtering

By Gregory Michael, For InfoWorld Test Center

**A**DMINISTRATORS of corporate e-mail systems must be on guard not only for spam and viruses coming in, but also for proprietary information and other potentially damaging content going out. Mail Essentials for Exchange 3.0 is a collection of tools that provide Microsoft Exchange shops with a means of controlling the e-mail that enters and leaves the internal company e-mail system.

Mail Essentials can function as a gateway between Microsoft Exchange and the Internet. Capable of being administered locally or remotely via the Exchange administrator, Mail Essentials allows content checking for specific users by integrating with the Exchange directory. Competitors in this genre include Content Technologies' Mailsweeper, Elron Software's Message Inspector, and Worldtalk's WorldSecure. Mail Essentials is not as powerful as these solutions, which allow you to set more complex rules for filtering incoming and outgoing messages, but it's much more

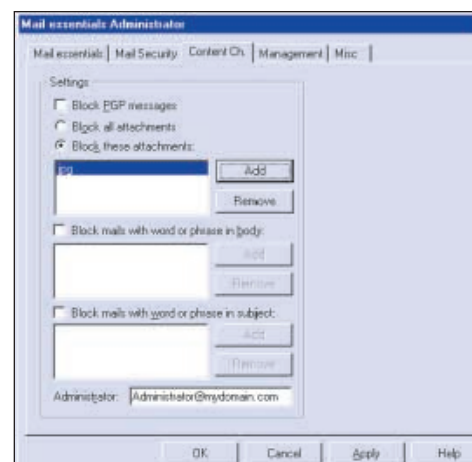
affordable and provides a good set of tools for the price.

I installed Mail Essentials on an Exchange 5.5 server with Exchange Service Pack 3 installed. The installation and configuration took about 30 minutes from start to finish. The installation was smooth, and the tabbed interface made configuration simple.

I started the configuration process by configuring Mail Essentials to receive e-mail. I pointed Mail Essentials to a POP3 mail server by adding the server to the POP3 Options menu. I then set the options to have Mail Essentials send outgoing mail in the SMTP Options menu. At this time I made the changes necessary to the Microsoft Exchange configuration to allow Mail Essentials to become the gateway between Exchange and the Internet. I finished by configuring various specific options.

Mail Essentials includes several tools for protecting the company's investment in e-mail and proprietary information. The inbound-

specific tool capabilities consist of scanning attachments for viruses, archiving inbound e-mail, defeating spam, checking content, and providing auto-reply functionality. Virus scanning requires the installation of a third-party anti-virus package. The anti-spam function provides some good basic protection, but requires the administrator to manually update domains that are known spam originators. (This limitation is supposed to be addressed in a



**CONFIGURING MAIL ESSENTIALS'** content checking is as simple as checking options and entering the words, phrases, and file types to filter.

forthcoming service pack.) The content-checking component allows administrators to block specific file extensions on attachments, words, or phrases within the e-mail body, or specific words or phrases in the subject line.

The auto-reply feature is a nice touch. For companies being inundated with e-mail requests from customers visiting their Web pages, the auto-reply feature allows administrators to tailor a specific response to a message depending on the header of the inbound message. The auto-reply can assign a tracking number and send the originator a personalized response and even an attachment, such as a product catalog.

The outbound tool capabilities are virus checking, archiving, compressing attachments, content checking, and placing a disclaimer footer on each outbound e-mail.

The content-checking feature prevents e-mail containing specific words, phrases, or types of attachments from entering or leaving the internal corporate e-mail system. This lets administrators view questionable e-mail to delete or forward the messages as appropriate. Mail

### THE BOTTOM LINE

## Mail Essentials for Exchange 3.0



### SUMMARY

This package is a combination of tools that provides effective protection against unsolicited, inappropriate, and proprietary content passing between the corporate mail system and the Internet.

### BUSINESS CASE

Mail Essentials is a cost-effective way to enforce a corporate e-mail policy. Although not as powerful or flexible as competing solutions, it is an effective means of blocking outbound mail that could cause costly lawsuits or security leaks.

### PROS

- ⊕ Inexpensive compared to competitors
- ⊕ Simple, fast content filtering of e-mail
- ⊕ Virus scanning and compression

### CONS

- ⊖ Does not scan internal e-mail
- ⊖ Labor-intensive anti-spam feature
- ⊖ Content-checking rules the same for inbound and outbound mail

### COST

\$1,995 for unlimited users

### PLATFORMS

Windows NT 4.0; Microsoft Exchange Server 4.0, 5.0, or 5.5

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Essentials does not provide content checking of internal e-mail that stays within the company e-mail system.

Using the archiving feature, a company can protect itself from having its outbound e-mail tampered with and used against it in a legal action. Inbound e-mail can also be archived, allowing managers to check e-mail sent to specific internal destinations. You can keep a log file of archived messages, and a reporting function allows you to retrieve information from the log file.

Another feature of Mail Essentials is the capability of encrypting and decrypting e-mail at the server — making this function invisible to the user. Note that this feature requires downloading and installing PGP (Pretty Good Privacy) freeware, Version 5.5.3. The site at which this can be downloaded is included in the Mail Essentials documentation.

Mail Essentials provides a cost-effective compilation of tools to help manage and protect company e-mail. This is a comprehensive

package that contains somewhat sophisticated mechanisms for limiting threats to inbound e-mail and preventing specific e-mail content from reaching Internet destinations. If you are planning an upgrade to Exchange 2000, an upgrade of Mail Essentials for Exchange 2000 is in the works.

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