

Not on the list?

Then you're not coming in. Put this automatic bouncer on your e-mail server and keep out those persistent, undesirable types

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System requirements

Windows 2000 (Professional, Server or Advanced Server) or Windows XP Professional. IIS5 SMTP service installed and running. Microsoft Exchange Server 2000, 4, 5 or 5.5, Lotus Notes 4.5 and up, or an SMTP/POP3 mail server.

UK supplier

GFI
E-mail: sales@gfi.co.uk
Web: www.gfi.com

Cost

Pricing starts at £169 for 10 mailboxes. A trial version is available at www.gfi.com/mes.

Bottom line

Pros Easy to configure, with an automatic whitelist manager.

Cons It doesn't offer content checking, antivirus protection or exploit detection unless it's used with GFI MailSecurity.

If you don't use spam protection on your e-mail, the average inbox is a depressing sight: all those invitations to buy dodgy products or view photographs of strange girls. This is where anti-spam software comes in handy. GFI MailEssentials for Exchange/SMTP 8 is a server-based anti-spam add-on for Microsoft Exchange. It's installed at the gateway so you don't need to have client-based anti-spam products on the workstations, which means you don't have to update the workstations when the spam rules need changing. It also prevents spam messages filling up your message stores.

The main problem with anti-spam products is the way in which they differentiate between 'genuine' spam and users' normal, if strange, e-mails. The fear of losing e-mails puts many people off using anti-spam software. GFI MailEssentials 8 uses a range of options to identify spam, including spotting incorrect 'From' headers with non-existent domains. It also allows system administrators to set up lists of keywords and phrases that clearly identify spam. If you suffer from spam e-mails in foreign languages, you can block all incoming e-mails in a particular character set (Figure 1).

Losing 'real' e-mails can be avoided by using whitelists – lists of people and companies from whom you want to always accept e-mails. GFI MailEssentials 8 has a whitelist management tool that automatically adds all your business partners to your whitelist.

Fooling the spammers

Various groups produce lists of domains that are used by spammers, either for the origination of spam, or as part of the route the spam takes. These DNS blacklists can be used within MailEssentials 8 to block problem domains so that you don't receive spam from addresses on the lists.

If a spammer doesn't get a report of non-delivery, they will sell your e-mail address on to other spammers as valid, and you'll get even more spams in the future. GFI MailEssentials 8 can bounce incoming spam back to the sender with a false non-delivery report (NDR). This gives the impression your e-mail address is invalid, so it won't be sold on.

The earlier release of MailEssentials let you add a corporate disclaimer to outgoing e-mails. This release lets you have multiple disclaimers, configured for individual users, groups or a domain.

GFI MailEssentials 8 has added support for Active Directory, and you can now use it to bind to IIS Virtual SMTP servers. Version 8 also has a more powerful mail monitoring utility. Earlier releases allowed you to monitor an e-mail conversation, but now you can configure the monitoring on the user group and domain, so you can monitor the e-mail conversation on the sender and recipient. A reporting option allows you to create reports based on user, mail server and domain usage, as well as create detailed reports on user communications.

GFI MailEssentials 8 overcomes most worries that people have about anti-spam products. The automatic whitelist management gets around many of the usual problems of anti-spam software, and the blocking options can be configured to offer sensible control of incoming mail. <

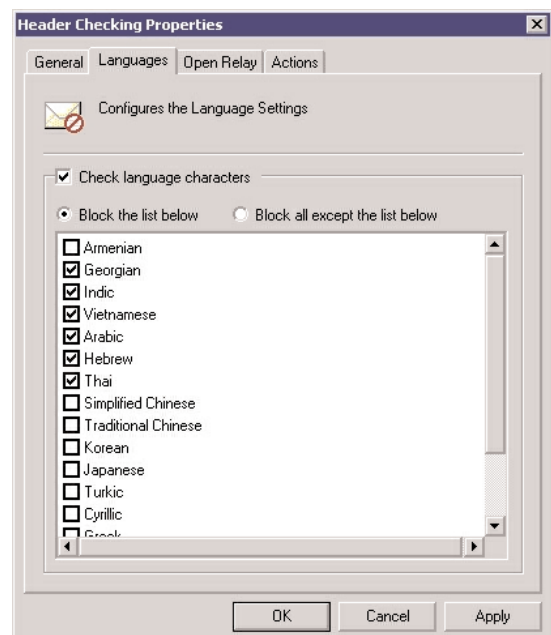


Figure 1: MailEssentials 8 can block spam in foreign languages