

# Case Study



## City of Amersfoort Offices Become a Spam-free Zone

IronPort email security appliances were chosen to prevent spam and email threats from interfering with city business.

### OVERVIEW

The City of Amersfoort is a charming location with a medieval street pattern, canals, and some remaining stone walls that were originally fortified in the 12th century. The stone walls did a fine job of protecting Amersfoort from foreign invaders. Today, however, 21st-century invaders of a different sort threaten Amersfoort daily. As one of the larger cities in the Netherlands with 140,000 citizens and 1200 municipal government employees, it is also the target of massive email spam.

Some departments within the city government had deployed localized anti-spam solutions, but the majority of employees spent 10 to 20 minutes each day cleaning spam out of their email in-boxes and looking for legitimate email messages. With approximately 1200 users, between 200 and 400 hours of productivity were lost daily, simply spent eliminating spam. The spam took away valuable time that could have been better used to assist citizens and represented an undesirable use of public funds.

#### CUSTOMER

City of Amersfoort, The Netherlands  
1200 employees

#### CHALLENGE

Eliminate high volumes of spam  
Deliver updates automatically to reduce administrative burden

#### SOLUTION

Email security appliance for performing real-time email threat assessment and identifying suspicious email senders and email viruses

#### RESULTS

- Prevented spam and viruses from entering city employee mailboxes
- Regained at least four hours of IT productivity and 200-400 hours of city employee productivity per day
- Freed employees to spend more time assisting citizens and improved use of public funds

### TECHNICAL CHALLENGES

The IT organization required four to five hours on an average day to manage and eliminate the spam. When large spam attacks struck Europe, email traffic could be completely halted for several hours and IT was forced to put aside more important tasks to manage the emergency.

“We had deployed a software spam filter, but it was not sufficient for handling large spam bombs,” says Hans Vonk, director of IT system administration for the City of Amersfoort. “We knew that spam was seriously affecting our productivity and were considering several different options for addressing the spam issue when we were introduced to the IronPort solution.”



### TECHNICAL CHALLENGES

Vonk and other city IT professionals were attending a government security day at the Cisco offices in Amsterdam when they first learned about IronPort® email security appliances. Although they were not specifically searching for an anti-spam appliance, the Amersfoort team knew that they wanted a solution that could be installed and would not require continuous management or tuning. After speaking with representatives from Netstone, a certified IronPort and Cisco partner, the City of Amersfoort team arranged to try the IronPort solution for 30 days.

“The Netstone team knows what they are doing and they have deep expertise with IronPort’s products,” says Vonk. “In addition to delivering technical excellence, they communicated with our team in a nontechnical way, enabling everyone to understand what the system was doing.”



The IronPort solution completely fulfilled our expectations for an email security appliance, and it is very easy to install. My advice to others is to simply buy it. It will save you much, much more than the appliance costs. We now have at least half a day, every day, for furthering the city’s business and serving citizens. It is worth it.



*Hans Vonk, director of IT system administration, City of Amersfoort*

### THE IRONPORT ADVANTAGE

IronPort Systems, now part of Cisco, is a leading provider of anti-spam, anti-virus, and anti-spyware appliances for organizations ranging from small businesses to the Global 2000. The city installed two IronPort C350™ appliances, configured redundantly, to cover its two email servers. The appliances’ anti-spam capabilities combine conventional techniques with innovative context-sensitive detection technology to eliminate the broadest range of known and emerging email threats. The city also uses IronPort SenderBase®, one of the world’s largest and most accurate threat detection databases to identify suspicious email sources, and IronPort Reputation Filters to perform real-time email threat assessment. Traffic from suspicious senders can be blocked to prevent malicious traffic from entering the city’s network. IronPort Virus Outbreak Filters™ detect new virus outbreaks in real time and then quarantine suspicious messages. Virus Outbreak Filters provide protection during the time that it takes for traditional virus software patches to be provided by vendors, which can require up to 42 hours. Instead of leaving an email system vulnerable to attack while waiting for a patch, the IronPort protects it.

### SOLUTION

The IronPort appliance arrived at the City of Amersfoort the day after a large spam attack and was installed the same day. Vonk and his team knew spam was a significant problem but they were shocked to see that 98 percent of the city’s inbound email was spam.

“The installation was easy and the only thing we did was watch the percentage of good email escalate as the IronPort detected and blocked spam,” says Vonk. “The system handled it automatically, and we didn’t have to do anything. The IronPort appliance arrived for a 30-day trial, and it never left.”

The IronPort email security appliance met the city’s primary criteria of being easy to use and manage. It runs without supervision and it does its job. Vonk estimates that the IT team has gained at least four more hours per day of productivity, enabling them to focus on the city’s business instead of eliminating spam email. City employees have gained more time to help citizens and respond to requests for information. Significant productivity gains also translate to more efficient use of public funds. Combined time savings of 200 hours per day for all city employees is worth approximately US\$10,000 per day. Now Amersfoort citizens receive more value in services for time that used to be spent cleaning spam out of email in-boxes.



### SOLUTION

The city has not suffered from major spam attacks or email delays since the IronPort appliance was installed. Two weeks after installation, the IT organization surveyed City employees and found that they unanimously approved of the IronPort solution and were extremely satisfied with the results that it provided.

“The IronPort solution completely fulfilled our expectations for an email security appliance, and it is very easy to install,” says Vonk. “My advice to others is to simply buy it. It will save you much, much more than the appliance costs. We now have at least half a day, every day, for furthering the city’s business and serving citizens. It is worth it.”

### PRODUCT LIST

Cisco IronPort C-350 Email Security Appliance



### FOR MORE INFORMATION

To find out more about Cisco solutions and services, visit: [www.cisco.com](http://www.cisco.com).

To find out more about IronPort solutions and services, visit:  
<http://www.cisco.com/web/products/ironport/index.html>

To learn more about the City of Amersfoort, visit [www.amersfoort.nl](http://www.amersfoort.nl)

This customer story is based on information provided by the City of Amersfoort, and describes how that particular organization benefits from the deployment of Cisco products. Many factors may have contributed to the results and benefits described; Cisco does not guarantee comparable results elsewhere.

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IronPort Systems, now part of Cisco, is a leading provider of anti-spam, anti-virus and anti-spyware appliances for organizations ranging from small businesses to the Global 2000. IronPort appliances utilize SenderBase®, the world's largest email and web threat detection network and database. IronPort products are innovative and easy-to-use, providing breakthrough performance and playing a mission-critical role in a company's network infrastructure.

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