

# Case Study: Hofstra University



## Hofstra University teaches spam and viruses a lesson with Proofpoint Messaging Security Gateway.™

### spam is not a popular major

Hofstra University, located in Hempstead, NY, comprises approximately 13,000 students across its undergraduate, graduate and School of Law programs. University officials were receiving a high volume of complaints from students and faculty about the steady increase in spam messages, making it difficult and time consuming for individuals to determine which messages were actually valid.

Hofstra was also plagued by an increase in inbound viruses and its legacy messaging security solution was not proving effective at stopping these inbound threats, eliminating only 10% of incoming spam and viruses. As a result, Hofstra started to investigate alternative solutions that would rid the organization of viruses and spam once and for all.

### Proofpoint makes the grade

Based on recommendations from analyst firm Gartner and Novell sales representatives, and by extensive research of anti-spam articles in the trade press, Hofstra started with a list of twenty messaging security solutions and then narrowed the contenders to nine based on its business requirements. Over the course of seven months, Hofstra evaluated each of the nine solutions and Proofpoint ultimately prevailed over the competition.

Hofstra's students and staff have an average of four email aliases each, so it was critical that the new anti-spam solution could combine spam data from multiple email addresses into a single, easily-managed user interface. The Proofpoint Messaging Security Gateway met this requirement, enabling Hofstra to present its email users with one easy-to-manage end-user digest, which aggregates information on all quarantined messages, regardless of which alias to which they are sent.

Unlike many of the other solutions that Hofstra evaluated, Proofpoint had developed its own anti-spam technology—a major selling point for the university in these times of frequent mergers and acquisitions among messaging security vendors. The patent-pending Proofpoint MLX™ machine learning technology—which analyzes more than

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**James Walker**  
Senior Systems Admin  
Hofstra University

### Business challenge

Hofstra University experienced a dramatic rise in the amount of spam reaching its 13,000 students, faculty and administrative staff, translating to more than 30% of all incoming mail. Email users were flooded with unsolicited spam messages and some fell prey to phishing attacks, sharing personal information with what they believed were legitimate sources. The university also experienced a dramatic uptick in viruses, which were negatively impacting network performance.

### Proofpoint solution

Hofstra reviewed messaging security solutions from 20 vendors and selected the Proofpoint Messaging Security Gateway™ due to its ease of administration, impressive platform stability and security, anti-spam accuracy, excellent reporting capabilities and regulatory compliance functionality.

### Results achieved

The Proofpoint Messaging Security Gateway has eliminated virtually all spam and viruses for Hofstra, without any instances of false positives. Moving forward, Hofstra is planning to work with Proofpoint to cleanse its outbound email in order to prevent sensitive student information from being disseminated outside of the university and to aid in compliance with FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) regulations.

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100,000 structural and content attributes in each message to decisively and accurately detect spam—was developed by scientists and engineers at the Proofpoint Anti-Spam Laboratory.

“Proofpoint was the best solution, hands down,” said James Walker, senior systems administrator with Hofstra University. “The Proofpoint Messaging Security Gateway impressed us with its flexibility, ease of administration and anti-spam and virus accuracy. The decision to go with Proofpoint was unanimous.”

Another Proofpoint differentiator was its ability to secure outbound messages and make it easy for Hofstra to comply with FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) regulations. Down the line, Hofstra is planning to expand its use of the Proofpoint Messaging Security Gateway in order to ensure that confidential student information is not accidentally leaked via email.

### Hofstra declares victory over spam

The deployment of the Proofpoint Messaging Security Gateway took just one day and virtually all spam and viruses were immediately eliminated. With its legacy anti-spam solution, Hofstra was only blocking one-third of incoming spam messages, but with Proofpoint, nearly 100% of spam and viruses—about 200,000 messages a day—were stopped on the spot.

**Proofpoint Products Deployed**  
**Proofpoint Messaging Security Gateway**  
**Proofpoint Spam Detection**  
**Proofpoint Virus Protection (F-Secure Version)**

“The easy deployment and fast results confirmed once again that we made the right decision to partner with Proofpoint,” James Walker said. “The Proofpoint Messaging Security Gateway has required absolutely no administration. The only time I need to access the system is to obtain weekly reports on spam and virus data. It is truly a ‘set it and forget it’ solution.”

Proofpoint has also allowed Hofstra to give each user personalized control over spam policies. Individual users are able to tune their level of protection based on personal preferences and can opt in and out of different spam policies (e.g., adult spam, global spam) and even set different policies for each of their email aliases.

Students and staff were quick to notice a difference when the Proofpoint appliance was deployed. “The response has been very positive,” continued Walker. “I have received many ‘thank you’ emails from happy Hofstra students who are no longer being bombarded daily with spam. The ease with which the Proofpoint Messaging Security Gateway fit into our university environment and its flexibility to expand to meet our future message needs, makes it an ideal solution for us.”

### About Hofstra University

Founded in 1935, Hofstra University is located in Hempstead NY, 25 miles east of New York City. Hofstra’s colleges and schools include: Hofstra College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Frank G. Zarb School of Business, School of Communication, School of Education and Allied Human Services, New College of Hofstra, School of Law, School for University Studies, Honors College, Saturday College, and University College for Continuing Education. Total university enrollment, including part-time undergraduate, graduate and School of Law, is approximately 13,000. For more information, visit [www.hofstra.edu](http://www.hofstra.edu).

### About Proofpoint, Inc.

Proofpoint provides messaging security solutions for large enterprises to stop spam, protect against email viruses, ensure compliance with corporate policies and regulations and defend against leaks of confidential and proprietary information via email. The company’s flagship products, the Proofpoint Messaging Security Gateway™ and Proofpoint Protection Server® provide future-proof messaging security using Proofpoint MLX™ technology, an advanced machine learning system developed by Proofpoint scientists and engineers.

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