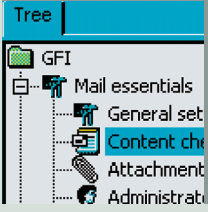


review

MAIL ESSENTIALS



REC HARDWARE
P500, 256Mb RAM
OS: Windows 2000/XP/NT4

PRICE
From £249 inc VAT for a 10-user licence. Visit the GFI site for more

CONTACT
GFI
Tel: 020 8546 0640

www.gfi.com

Internetworks VERDICT

+ Well written, excellent features

- Some elements need more work – for example the compression tool

90%



Email checker and anti-virus software

PC only

Mail Essentials

GFI

You could reduce the administration overhead on your Exchange server overnight with this set of mail server add-ons

EXCHANGE 2000 is a great mail server if you simply want to have mail sent and received to your domain. That may seem an obvious thing to say, as sending and receiving mail is what mail servers do! But the gaps begin to appear in Exchange when you need to do something a little more complex than the basic send and receive jobs.

You may have noticed, for example, that many businesses choose to add a confidentiality and individuality notice to the end of every email – you know the sort of thing, 'This email, and any attachments, are confidential. Opinions expressed are those of the individual, and may not represent the opinions.'

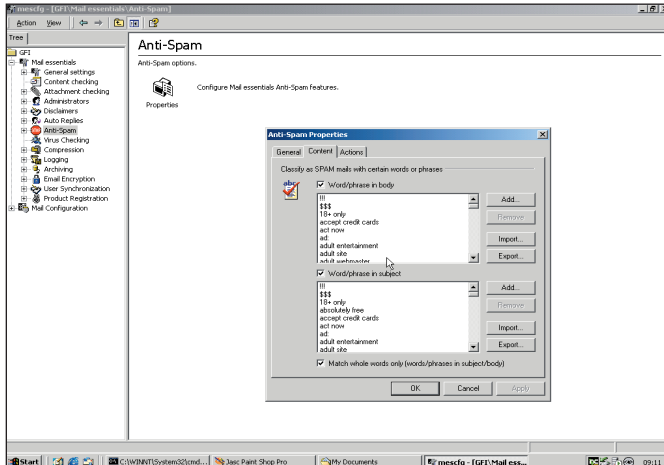
Mail Essentials will enable you to create a global disclaimer for a mail domain, though you can't apply custom disclaimers to different user groups, so it's all or nothing with this approach. You can either enter the text of the disclaimer in to the application direct, or import it from any plain text file.

I SHALL SAY ZEES ONLY WANCE...

Every company has its secrets, and it's getting harder and harder to prevent information being leaked before launch, especially if you're not monitoring email.

You can set Mail Essentials up to scan all outgoing mail for specific keywords in the body and subject, so if you have a project codenamed 'Bart', the software could be programmed to respond in one of a number of ways.

Mail Essentials will quarantine, delete, or move any message it



Set up user groups to exclude certain people from mail scanning

detects, depending on how it is set up. If the mail is quarantined, then it is silently put aside in a safe area of the server until an administrator checks it through.

If you choose to have the server delete any messages containing 'Bart' then it can also be set to mail the sender and/or the recipient notifying them of what has happened. If you have configured Mail Essentials to check all internal mail as well as that being passed to the outside world, this could prevent genuine discussion within your organisation. This can usually be resolved by setting up users or groups who are excluded from the filter – usually project managers, directors, etc.

SAY GOODBYE TO SPAM

A separate form of filtering applies to spam mail – messages containing popular spam phrases can also be discarded. A relatively large library of common phrases is installed with the software, and if you are being flooded with a particularly violent piece of spam then you can add that to the filter and keep it from clogging up your network.

That virus mail could also have been intercepted by Mail Essentials' virus link-up to a third-party scanner. Although the software does include some basic virus scanning itself, and doesn't recommend that you use an external scanner, we believe that the safest way to detect viruses in mail is

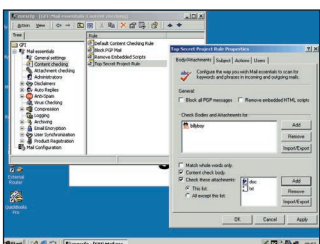
with an established command line scanner.

Filtering isn't all that Mail Essentials does – another nifty feature is compression. The software will take any really large attachments on mails and attempt to compress them in to a zip file, or self-extracting executable. You can define the threshold at which the compression engine kicks in, and you can also set it to ignore certain file types so that, for example, the software doesn't attempt to zip a zip file.

We were surprised to see that we couldn't add 'tar.gz' as a file type to be ignored – that's a common form of double compression on UNIX systems that's similar to zip files. As the software doesn't allow any sort of double barrelled extension, we had to insert 'gz' only, and hope for the best. This did indeed pick up the 'tar.gz' files and let them through without an attempt at compression – still, we would've liked to have been able to put in the extension we were trying to filter, and not have to guess at what will and won't work.

With PGP (Pretty Good Privacy), Mail Essentials can encrypt all mails, and can be set to disallow any outgoing mails encrypted with PGP, or that contain scripts. Overall, it's a well-presented and flexible tool that we recommend to any Exchange administrator who wants to cut down on their network admin.

Rob Fenwick



Mail Essentials is controlled by a well structured and clean Microsoft Management Console snap-in