Proofpoint Replies All: Email is Alive and Well

Releases 2009 Email Year in Review

SUNNYVALE, Calif. – December 14, 2009 – In anticipation of the start of another new year, Proofpoint, Inc., the leading provider of SaaS email security, email archiving and data loss prevention solutions, highlights today several of the most notable, headline-grabbing email stories of 2009 in its second annual Email Year in Review.

"With all due respect to Mark Twain, reports in 2009 that claim the death of email are greatly exaggerated. Despite the rapid growth of social networks and other new communications tools available to us, email continues to evolve and drive the way we communicate both in our personal and business lives—and we don't see that changing anytime soon," said Keith Crosley, director of market development at Proofpoint.

In fact, a September 2009 Osterman Research survey concluded that despite the popularity of Twitter and Facebook, only three percent of 300 respondents claimed, "my use of email is decreasing," while 45 percent answered, "my use of email is increasing."

Many of the year’s prominent email-related stories focused on the new White House administration's use of email to gather support, the previous administration's struggles with the application, red-faced private and public sector executives sharing more than just spreadsheets, and a gathering media drumbeat claiming that email is "so 1999" and may be a relic of the technology past.

Following its recent recount of the scariest moments this year (click here), below is Proofpoint's list of top stories:

1. **Steamy Sanford affair**
   We’ve all heard the adage, "Don't put in email what you wouldn't want in the daily newspaper." South Carolina governor, Mark Sanford, certainly did not get the memo. In June 2009, The State published steamy emails detailing Sanford's affair with "Maria," a woman in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Oops.

2. **'Climategate'**
   On Nov. 17, over 1,000 emails sent from or to members of the Climatic Research Unit (CRU) at the University of East Anglia in eastern England were allegedly hacked and leaked onto the Internet. Critics have asserted that the emails show collusion by climate scientists to withhold scientific information, while other climate scientists have called the incident a smear campaign. Could it be that the hackers aren't the only ones in hot water?

3. **Waves of praise**
   Launched on Oct. 1, Google Wave is "attempting to change the way we communicate and collaborate online." If you were one of the chosen few and received an invite, you probably gushed and praised the new tool – perhaps even claiming its instant ubiquity over email. The one major drawback however, is that one better have advanced Web skills since Wave is certainly not for dummies.

4. **Email is such a bore**
   Later in the month of October, Jessica Vascellaro of the Wall Street Journal rained on email's parade with a puffy and provocative piece, "Why Email No Longer Rules." In it, she wrote: "Email, stuck in the era of attachments, seems boring compared to services like Google Wave..." Other mission critical applications such as ERP, CRM and business intelligence systems also seem rather boring now that we think about it.

5. **You've got salmonella!**
   A House panel investigating Peanut Corp. of America, the company accused of shipping peanut products it knew were contaminated, uncovered more surprising emails. Apparently more concerned with the company's bottom line than human lives, President Stewart Parnell told underlings via email to continue shipping product despite knowledge of the salmonella outbreak.

   In fact, in one of the more bizarre emails released in February, Parnell pleaded with Food and Drug Administration officials to let him keep doing business. "Obviously we are not shipping any peanut butter products affected by the recall but desperately at least need to turn the Raw Peanuts on our floor into money," he wrote in an email to the FDA on January 19.

6. **Mydoom turns five**
   On Jan. 26, the security industry noted the five-year anniversary of the Mydoom virus. Mydoom is regarded as the fastest-spreading email worm ever and a precursor to the continuing plague of "blended threats" that spread malware...
via email and malicious Web sites.

7. **Scammers glom on to the day's top stories**
   Online scammers, always quick to exploit the latest news event, were trolling in full force in 2009. For example, in February, the scammers sent out emails promising economic-stimulus package payments. But, in fine fraudster fashion, they attempted to steal sensitive data from the user.

   Another manifestation of this was an increase in spam related to "business opportunities," jobs and resumes as spammers attempted to prey on the jobless or those insecure about their employment. Upon further research, Proofpoint determined that this sort of spam was up by at least 500% in late January, much greater than the general increase in spam (which was about 30-40% in the same period).

8. **Conficker – all hype without the bite**
   Panic over the worm reached a frenzy leading up to April 1. In the end, Conficker didn't fool us as it came and went with a whimper.

**About Proofpoint, Inc.**
Proofpoint secures and improves enterprise email infrastructure with solutions for email security, archiving, encryption and data loss prevention. Proofpoint solutions defend against spam and viruses, prevent leaks of confidential and private information, encrypt sensitive emails and archive messages for retention, e-discovery and easier mailbox management. Proofpoint solutions can be deployed on-demand (SaaS) on-premises (appliance), or in a hybrid architecture for maximum flexibility and scalability. For more information, please visit http://www.proofpoint.com.

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