

Total Fitness Introduces Webroot Web and Email Security Services

With a chain of 24 centres employing up to 1,000 people, Total Fitness operates some of the leading leisure and fitness clubs across the UK and Ireland offering customers fully-equipped gyms, swimming pools, saunas and solariums.

Business Drivers

The company takes information security seriously, especially the filtering of computers within its cafes which provide access to the Internet. With a brand that has a clear family-focus, it is paramount that Total Fitness protects its reputation and prevents members from seeing inappropriate content on its public computers.

Dean Rooney, IT manager at Total Fitness, runs an IT department that supports 300 users with only one colleague. This team of two needed a security system that would be reliable, easy to use and would take minimal time to manage.



The Cloud as a Security Solution

Total Fitness decided to bring its email management in-house and knew that spam filtering was a key requirement to ensure that business communications remained free-flowing. "We looked at server systems that could control spam but wanted something that would work at the perimeter, so we picked Webroot® Email Security Service," says Rooney.

Late in 2009, management required Rooney to research other suppliers and he reluctantly signed up with another email security service.

However things did not go smoothly, "The transfer process was a real struggle and we didn't get the kind of help that we needed," Rooney explains. "For instance, we got an impersonal introductory email, with no real explanation of what to do, and very little support. Eventually we managed to get our email filtering working, only to find that the maintenance was a lot more complex. As an example, it took up to 15 minutes to check the image filters, because the portal was slow and the menu structure was complicated. This was unacceptable. It meant that I stopped checking so regularly and consequently a lot of email was blocked and delayed which impacted on the business."

Rooney also noticed that spam was starting to get through because the filtering was not as smart as the Webroot service. After a month he had had enough and decided to return to Webroot.

"We made the decision to move back to Webroot after just a month because with only two of us to run the whole network it was important to have a solution which cuts down on workload and is easy to use. Basically, the Webroot solution does exactly what it needs to do and takes a lot less time to manage," comments Rooney. "Plus Webroot's call centre is really good, and exceeds my expectations for support: I don't just get a response within a few hours, I get a fix too. So we were happy to sign an extended contract as we knew the service worked for us."

Where They Gained

- Reduced email management time. Important to a two-man IT team managing 300 users over 24 locations.
- A portal that is easy to use. Time to check filters was cut from 30 minutes per day to 4 minutes.
- Elimination of spam and no false positives. Of 230,000 mails, 12% is legitimate and the rest is filtered out so business is unimpeded.
- Better support. Fast response and fix for technical issues within 24 hours.
- The ability to scan for word phrases inside emails, and inside the files attached to emails.

As for the effectiveness of Webroot® Email Security Service, Rooney is in no doubt: "In the last four weeks we've received over 230,000 emails of which 88 per cent were spam and Webroot's filters stopped all of it. This saves us a lot of time. In fact since I've been using the service I haven't had to fish anything out of the spam filters. And if our system ever goes down, we won't get any bounce-backs as it is held on Webroot's servers and staff can temporarily access email via the Web if necessary."

Web Security

Having sorted out email security, Rooney is now addressing his requirements for Web filtering. The company is moving over to Webroot® Web Security Service, from a combination of manually maintained Web security software (CYBERSitter) on the public desktops in the company's 18 cafes, all of which have computers and provide access to the Internet, and a proxy service to filter Web traffic on employees' computers at the Wilmslow head office. "We'll be using Webroot Web Security Service and looking to roll it out across both groups of users."

At the moment the two-man IT department's resources are challenged, as it has to install CYBERSitter on each machine manually and set the policy which takes 15 minutes each. Rooney can see huge benefits from moving to cloud-based Web filtering: "There's no software to install and update with Webroot. Plus it will give us more control, with centralised access to reports so we can see if anyone, employee or member, is trying to access inappropriate material. It will also be useful to examine trends across the centres."

"Total Fitness is very much a family oriented business. We offer family memberships, lots of bespoke children's gyms, plus we have Nintendo Wiis and Xbox game consoles in our lounges, run kids' classes during school holidays and provide internet access for all in many of our coffee shops. But importantly the cafes are public areas so we can't risk children seeing adult material or, for example, public hate sites. If that happened it would be a PR disaster."

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Future Developments

Total Fitness also plans to expand its number of outlets and it will be a simple matter to add licences for the new computers on the network. "It's important to us that we maintain high security standards however large we grow, so the scalability of the Webroot service is a plus," observes Rooney.

He also anticipates the benefits of converging all aspects of Internet security from multiple suppliers will enable Total Fitness to protect its brand, its reputation and its users while saving time and money with Webroot as its sole security partner.

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