

# University of California Riverside

## Meeting the Needs of Higher Education

“MIRAPOINT HAS ALLOWED US TO DELIVER A ROBUST EMAIL EXPERIENCE WITH MINIMAL STAFF RESOURCES. WE WENT FROM FIVE PEOPLE MANAGING THE SYSTEMS DOWN TO TWO.”

*Andrew Tristan, Manager of Technology and Security, UC Riverside*

CASE STUDY | EDUCATION



### BUSINESS NEED

Reliable, centralized, secure, complete messaging solution

### SOLUTION

Mirapoint RazorGate email security appliances and Mirapoint Message Server appliances

### BOTTOM LINE

Mirapoint provides a secure messaging infrastructure that's reliable and easy-to-manage

### Background

UC Riverside, located on a picturesque 1200-acre campus at the foot of the Box Springs Mountains in Southern California, is a major research university and national center for the humanities. Current enrollment includes about 15,000 undergraduate and 2000 graduate students. With about 1000 faculty and 3000 staff, the University supports about 25,000 email users. Email is an essential part of campus life, providing the de facto means of interaction between students and the administration, from financial aid to the Registrar's office. On a busy day, over 500 email messages per minute are handled by the school's email systems. Smooth, uninterrupted flow of messages is essential.

### The Business Need

In 2000, the university's email infrastructure was a patchwork quilt of diverse systems, servers, and mail software. A large Sendmail system running on aging UNIX servers supported a majority of students, while a VMS server cluster running MultiNet supported most faculty and staff. "MultiNet crashed a couple times a month," recalls Andrew Tristan, Manager of Technology and Security at UC Riverside. "And when a large electronic mailing went out to all faculty and staff, users would complain about the response time."

In addition, the university's Information Technology group was responsible for managing more than a dozen other smaller UNIX-based messaging systems running Sendmail that served various departments across the campus. There was no consistent treatment of viruses or spam across the various systems, which was becoming a problem, and no easy way to equip the systems to deal with them. "We were stretched to the breaking point, managing servers all over campus," laments Tristan. "And we knew that UC Riverside would continue to grow and we would soon be flooded with new users."

Something clearly had to be done to consolidate disparate systems, simplify management, increase reliability, and deal effectively with virus and spam issues.



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## The Mirapoint Solution

A team was formed to investigate and evaluate options. Tristan proposed three alternatives: deploy UNIX servers running a commercially supported version of Sendmail, develop a homegrown messaging system in house, or implement a solution from Mirapoint. The homegrown option was eventually ruled out because of the extended time and effort required to develop it, plus the lack of external support should a problem occur.

In order to choose from the remaining options, the University set up two “demo” systems: one using software from Sendmail installed on a general-purpose server, and another consisting of Mirapoint appliances. A number of students, faculty, and staff were assigned to the two systems to provide end-user feedback.

Deploying a commercially supported version of Sendmail would provide the University with vendor support, should it be needed, but demo users complained about the Webmail interface. Mirapoint, on the other hand, easily met the criteria identified by the evaluation team. “We had already invested a great deal of time and effort in setting up an LDAP infrastructure and Mirapoint supported LDAP very nicely,” says Tristan. “And Mirapoint’s appliance approach would allow us to bring the system online in short order, which was a positive. Also, Mirapoint’s implementation of the mail store was pretty impressive.”

The Mirapoint solution was deployed in phases beginning in 2001. All students were migrated off the old Sendmail system at the beginning of the fall 2001 semester. “It went fairly quickly,” recalls Tristan. “Since we had all the LDAP infrastructure in place containing student information, it only required updating a few LDAP attributes. The actual physical migration took less than a day.”

In phase two, faculty and staff were allowed to “opt in” to the new system at their own pace during a six-month period of time between September 2003 and spring 2004. At the end of the that period, the remaining 10 percent of faculty and staff were migrated. A few small departmental mail systems remain, although they too benefit from the Mirapoint system. The RazorGate appliances route all incoming mail for the University’s domain, ucr.edu, to the Mirapoint Message Servers as well as the remaining non-Mirapoint systems. RazorGate provides powerful spam filtering and integrated, industry-leading virus scanning technology for both Mirapoint and non-Mirapoint systems.

In the spring of 2005, the University migrated all faculty from the two original Mirapoint M4000 Message Servers to two new Mirapoint M4500 Message Servers, providing each user with 1 Gigabyte of storage. “We did that in one evening,” says Tristan. “Faculty came in the next day

and had no idea they had been moved. We were able to do that in short order with absolutely no impact on service. We were very pleased with that.”

The University has begun a pilot project to evaluate access to email via handheld devices, such as PDAs and cell phones, using Wireless Application Protocol (WAP), which Mirapoint supports. “That’s starting to take off,” says Tristan. We’ve been fairly successful so far.”

## The Bottom Line

The patchwork quilt of message systems has been transformed into a highly manageable, reliable, and secure campus-wide system. According to Tristan, message system downtime has nearly disappeared with the Mirapoint solution. “As far as unscheduled downtime goes, I would say we are at 0.00001 percent.” The time required to manage the system, compared to the old systems has declined dramatically as well. “We went from five people managing the systems down to two,” says Tristan. “Now most of the administration work is handled by one person.”

The RazorGate appliance has also improved security—and reduced administrative tasks. “When we started doing virus scanning through Mirapoint we noticed the amount of time our support organization spent helping people disinfect their machines dropped dramatically,” says Tristan.

Tristan sums up his experience this way. “Mirapoint has allowed us to deliver a robust email experience with minimal staff resources. For me, that’s the bottom line.”

## About Mirapoint

Mirapoint® is the market leader in appliance-based solutions for secure message networks in enterprise, service provider, and education organizations, with more than 100 million mailboxes served and secured worldwide. Customers use Mirapoint appliances including the Message Server mail appliance and RazorGate mail security appliance to build the messaging infrastructure that intelligently serves, secures and manages email. Mirapoint is headquartered in Sunnyvale, California, with offices throughout North America, Europe and Asia. For more information on Mirapoint, visit its Website at [www.mirapoint.com](http://www.mirapoint.com).

## Configuration

- Two Mirapoint Message Server M4000 Appliances
- Two Mirapoint Message Server M4500 Appliances
- Two Mirapoint RazorGate Email Security Appliances