



EXCERPT FROM VIRUS BULLETIN ANTI-SPAM COMPARATIVE REVIEW, SEPTEMBER 2011

Mailshell Anti-Spam SDK

SC rate: 99.89%

FP rate: 0.00%

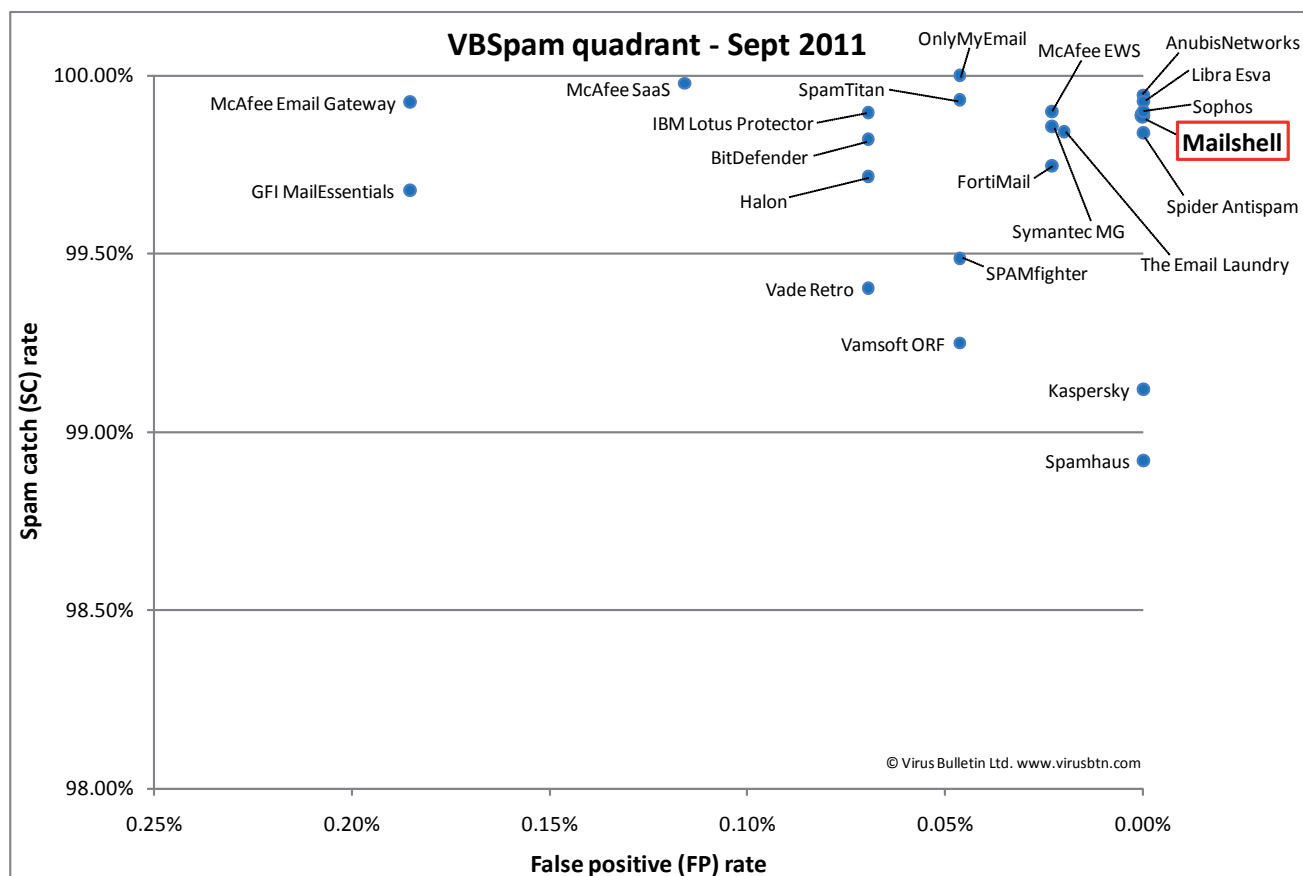
Final score: 99.89

Project Honey Pot SC rate: 99.83%

Abusix SC rate: 99.95%

Newsletters FP rate: 0.00%

To say that *Mailshell* debuts in this test is perhaps not quite true. The product itself has not been tested before, but the company offers security solutions for OEMs, including DNS security, URL filtering and an anti-spam SDK. The latter has implicitly been tested through a number of other products that make use of it – but now it debuts on its own.



Mailshell Anti-Spam SDK was set up on a *Linux* server on our premises and plugged into *sendmail* as a ‘milter’ – this is one of several ways in which OEMs can use the product. It worked quickly and easily; in fact, we had more issues with setting up *sendmail* than with plugging *Mailshell* into it.

The product’s performance was very good. *Mailshell* blocked an impressive 99.89% of spam. That, of course, is only half of the picture but the other half was equally good, if not better: no legitimate emails were missed, and no newsletters were missed either. With this month’s fourth highest final score *Mailshell* earns its first VBSpam award as a product in its own right.

Methodology

The VBSpam test methodology can be found at <http://www.virusbtn.com/vbspam/methodology/>. As usual, email was sent to the products in parallel and in real time, and products were given the option to block email pre-DATA. Three products chose to make use of this option.

Products ranked by final score*	
AnubisNetworks	99.94
Libra Esva	99.93
Sophos Email Appliance	99.90
Mailshell	99.89
Spider Antispam	99.84
McAfee EWS	99.78
OnlyMyEmail	99.77
Symantec Messaging Gateway	99.74
The Email Laundry	99.72
SpamTitan	99.70
FortiMail	99.63
IBM Lotus Protector	99.55
BitDefender	99.47
McAfee SaaS	99.40
Halon Security	99.37
SPAMfighter	99.25
Kaspersky Anti-Spam 3.0	99.12
Vade Retro	99.06
Vamsoft ORF	99.02
McAfee Email Gateway	99.00
GFI MailEssentials	98.75

* Full solutions only.

The products that needed to be installed on a server were installed on a *Dell PowerEdge R200*, with a 3.0GHz dual core processor and 4GB of RAM. The *Linux* products ran on *SuSE Linux Enterprise Server 11*; the *Windows Server* products ran on either the 2003 or the 2008 version, depending on which was recommended by the vendor.

To compare the products, we calculate a ‘final score’, which is defined as the spam catch (SC) rate minus five times the false positive (FP) rate. Products earn VBSpam certification if this value is at least 97:

$$SC - (5 \times FP) \geq 97$$

The test ran for 19 consecutive days, from 12am GMT on Thursday 11 August 2011 until 12am GMT on Tuesday 29 August 2011.

The corpus contained 176,485 emails, 171,963 of which were spam. Of these, 87,462 were provided by *Project Honey Pot* and 84,501 were provided by *Abusix*; they were all relayed in real time, as were the 4,315 legitimate emails (‘ham’). The remaining 207 emails made up a small corpus of ‘newsletters’: non-personal emails that are sent with certain regularity after the recipient has subscribed to them. This corpus was generated by manually subscribing to a large number of newsletters, in a number of different languages and on various topics.

We set two restrictions on the newsletter corpus: no newsletter was included more than five times (to avoid the results being skewed by performance on a few daily newsletters), and subscription to all newsletters in the corpus was confirmed via email.

We understand that some products will block the occasional newsletter – and we are willing to assume this may have happened at the implicit or explicit request of their customers. Therefore, performance on the corpus of newsletters does not count towards the final score or have a bearing on the VBSpam awards. Still, with only small differences between products’ performance in recent tests, the introduction of this corpus should provide some extra details on each product, which may be valuable to customers.



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