

## IMAIL SERVER PASSES THE TEST AT PRAIRIE LAKES AREA EDUCATION AGENCY

Case study

**Company:**

Prairie Lakes Area Education Agency

**Industry:**

Education

**Business challenge:**

Prairie Lakes Area Education Agency needed a tool to handle a large number of communications from different platforms across multiple sites.

**Outcome:**

Ipswitch IMail Server provides the scalable solution Prairie Lakes Area Education Agency needs to address its critical email communications.

Iowa's Area Education Agencies (AEAs) work as educational partners with public and accredited private schools to help students, school staff, parents and communities. AEAs provide special education support services, media and technology services, a variety of instructional services, professional development and leadership to promote school improvement. The Iowa AEAs are widely regarded as one of the foremost regional service systems in the country. Prairie Lakes AEA provides the technology services to most of the school districts, including Network Planning and Evaluation, Server Installation Assistance, Workstation Configuration Assistance and email Hosting.

Scott Fosseen, IT Manager for the Prairie Lakes AEA, is in charge of email hosting, and after examining his options, he chose Ipswitch IMail™ Server. "There were three important factors in considering the application we would use," says Fosseen. "One was price. The other two were the distribution list capability and the size of the footprint." Fosseen had been using NT Mail to support the Prairie Lakes AEA and needed to move to another application because the amount of information being stored was going to require him to purchase an additional server. "With Ipswitch IMail Server, we didn't need a dedicated machine like with Microsoft® Exchange," says Fosseen. "We were able to run DNS, Web Server and IMail Server all on one box, and IMail Server was a lot simpler to install and configure. We liked the GUI control panel and the administration side was a lot simpler than our previous product."

Ipswitch IMail Server provides solid, scalable, standards-based (POP3/IMAP4/SMTP) email that's compatible with almost any email client, including Microsoft Outlook®. "Each school district is an independent entity," explains Fosseen. "I have some that use Outlook Express, Eudora®, Quickmail®, Entourage - any standard client mail system. In all of these situations, Ipswitch IMail Server works very well."

When the Prairie Lakes AEA began, there were three school districts plus the agency. "It was fairly easy to run and control," says Fosseen. "Now there are 54 school districts that we support and we host mail for 26 through IMail. When we have to add a school district, I add a new IP address to the file server, create a domain name for the district and a user name and password. Then I give them access, walk them through the product, and the whole thing is incredibly fast and takes only 15-20 minutes to set up an entire district on the system."

Because Ipswitch IMail Server supports unlimited domains and virtual domains, as the number of school districts grows, Fosseen anticipates that Ipswitch IMail Server will easily scale to accommodate the AEA. "We're up to 160,000 emails, but I haven't had to update the hardware in a few years. I'm just reaching capacity on that server now."

Since Fosseen runs the entire production instance of Ipswitch IMail Server virtually on his own, he needed something that was not only simple to use but simple to teach as well. "I wouldn't tell all the school districts about it if it wasn't easy to administer," Fosseen professes. "I barely need to speak to the schools about the product from a support perspective." Fosseen adds that after the initial training, the most typical question he gets is about how to set up a group address book, which is another quick and easy conversation; IMail Server provides group distribution lists that deliver information where users look first - in their inboxes.

Fosseen can also make changes for a particular user or school district throughout the system without losing any settings. "We have a wide variety of users that range from the very savvy to the technically challenged," he says. Ipswitch IMail Server works on both Windows and Mac operating systems, and while some clients feel that the current interface looks just like Microsoft Outlook®, "There are still people who need written instructions to figure out how to check their email," adds Fosseen.

Industry wide, at least half of all email sent is junk, and Fosseen says that in the case of Prairie Lakes AEA, it's closer to 90%. Ipswitch IMail Server reduces spam using a variety of tools, putting incoming mail through statistical filters, phrase filters and connection checks, which verify that the user connecting to the IMail Server is not associated with a domain or IP black list.

As the number of school districts in the Prairie Lakes AEA continues to increase along with the number of emails, Fosseen knows he can rely on Ipswitch IMail Server to deliver the same problem-free environment that convinced him to purchase the product in the first place. With the advent of new and different products flooding the market, he says that the reason he stays with Ipswitch IMail Server is the same as it was on the day he brought it into the agency: "We installed it and it worked."

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- Scott Fosseen, IT Manager,  
Prairie Lakes AEA

10 Maguire Road  
Lexington, MA 02421  
(781) 676-5700

Zekeringstraat 17  
1014 BM Amsterdam  
The Netherlands