



## TEXAS APARTMENT LOCATORS

### > Industry

Real Estate

### > Client Information

Texas Apartment Locators, with over 20 branch locations and 350 users, has been locating Texas apartments and rental housing for Dallas, Houston, San Antonio, and Austin renters since 1972. It's considered one of the founders of the locating industry.

### > Problem

Viruses were rampant in its email communications (both inbound and outbound) and the corporate office could do nothing about it.

### > Solution

Nitix-powered Net Integrator Mark I server

### > Quote

"Because the Nitix server operating system kernel is Linux-based, it's immune to the viruses that were eating up the Windows-based workstations," says Joe Wolf of Wolf Computer Networking.



# Case Studies

## OVERVIEW

Texas Apartment Locators, with over 20 branch locations and 350 users, has been locating Texas apartments and rental housing for Dallas, Houston, San Antonio, and Austin renters since 1972. It's considered one of the founders of the locating industry.

Its main concern was to remove threats of viruses from email, and provide controls to address security concerns. Any solution had to be simple to implement and maintain. The solution would also be required to accommodate the wide geographic base of users.

## CHALLENGES

Texas Apartment Locators has branch offices throughout Texas, but due to its business model and method, the company doesn't always

own the workstations used by its personnel. Some are contractors who use their home systems and the branch office manager allows people to bring in their own systems. Viruses were rampant in email communications (inbound and outbound) and the corporate office could do nothing about it.

It was using a web-hosting service for email, but its business model is based on de-centralized responsibility for workstations, anti-virus software and regular updates were non-existent or haphazardly applied at best. Its email was almost exclusively used externally, so exposure to viruses was all but guaranteed.



"Large infestations of destructive viruses were handled on a case-by-case basis. Routinely, office personnel would forward viruses to their clientele because they didn't know that their systems had been compromised," says Joe Wolf of Wolf Computer Networking.

## SOLUTION

Wolf Computer Networking decided a Nitix-powered Net Integrator Mark I with Nitix's VirusProtect anti-virus software was the best solution. Two Internet connections were implemented: an ADSL line provided by Southwestern Bell and a cable-based broadband line provided by TimeWarner. This redundant connectivity, coupled with the Nitix's DoubleVision capability, helps ensure that users always have access to their email server.

Nitix's Dynamic DNS service allows the company to obtain inexpensive dynamic Internet connections as opposed to the more expensive static variety. This resulted in significant cost-savings while enabling users to locate the server on the

Internet by its human-friendly name, rather than IP address.

With the infrastructure in place, the POP and SMTP services of Nitix were enabled. To address the issue of security, the port numbers of these email services were changed, facilitated by Nitix's easy-to-use FastForward capability. Additionally, the port numbers are rotated on a monthly basis, preventing former employees from accessing the corporate email system. Wolf Computer Networking developed a simple user guide to assist users with the port-number changes.



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With Nitix's VirusProtect server-side anti-virus capability activated, all inbound and outbound email is checked for viruses and cleaned if necessary.

The subscription service helps ensure that new viruses will be caught, while removing the burden of manual updates on the servers and workstations.

"Because the Nitix server operating system kernel is Linux-based, it's immune to the viruses that were eating up the Windows®-based workstations," says Wolf.

### CONCLUSION

The VirusProtect anti-virus capabilities seamlessly and automatically ensure that all email (inbound as well as outbound) is virus free. The DynamicDNS service allows Texas Apartment Locators to use less expensive Internet connections to achieve its goals, yet maintain the simplicity of use it demands. DoubleVision provides high-availability without additional hardware costs.

The immediate, initial purchase costs of the Nitix-powered Net Integrator solution was well below half that of a comparable Microsoft® solution. Plus, the ease of use of the Nitix-powered Net Integrator Mark I means the client didn't need additional personnel to manage the server.

"The Nitix-powered Net Integrator Mark I completely satisfied the demands of the client, while coming in well below the assigned budget for the project. Texas Apartment Locators later had the opportunity to work with Net Integration's help desk; the experience was so overwhelmingly positive that it had no doubt it had made the right decision," says Wolf.