



Spammers were using phished accounts to send spam out from Hostway's network, so Hostway sought a solution to recover compromised accounts, block the spammers and prevent their IP addresses from being blacklisted.

## Outbound Spam Protection – Case Study

### ABOUT HOSTWAY

More than 600,000 customers rely on Hostway to provide secure, reliable and value-rich hosting services for their Web operations. Hostway processes more than 1 million outbound messages daily.

- Founded: 1998
- Major clients: Sony Music, Coca Cola, Fox News
- Serving: 1.4M websites
- Locations: US, Europe, India, Korea, Canada and Australia

### THE OUTBOUND SPAM PROBLEM

Like many hosting companies, some users' accounts at Hostway had been compromised when their credentials were phished. Spammers would then initiate crafted spam attacks from these accounts which would emanate from Hostway's IP addresses. This would result in these addresses being blocked by multiple ISPs.

To combat outbound spam and detect compromised accounts, Hostway used a combination of custom rate-limiting scripts, regex filters, log monitoring scripts, and alerting systems based on message queue sizes. These methods detected spammers exceeding the rate limits and the compromised accounts were then disabled by system staff. Spammers were, however, managing to work around the rate limits by automating the creation of new accounts with the compromised credentials.

### THE SOLUTION – COMMTOUCH'S OUTBOUND SPAM PROTECTION (OSP)

Hostway added Commtouch's solution into their outgoing mail path. OSP's pattern detection was able to quickly identify spam messages and then notify Hostway about the compromised accounts - regardless of the rate at which the spam was sent.

### BENEFITS FOR HOSTWAY

- **Secures Hostway's IP reputation** – Blocking outbound spam has prevented blacklisting by major ISPs.
- **Saves money** – The Commtouch solution has minimized operational costs associated with resolving blocked IPs, handling dissatisfied customers, and increasing existing hardware and support staff.
- **Improves customer satisfaction** – Hostway has been able to detect many compromised accounts and return control of these to the actual account owners.
- **Increased efficiency** - The Commtouch solution is now an integral part of Hostway's abuse report analysis process, providing reliable information about compromised accounts.



"Commtouch's Outbound Spam Protection helped Hostway identify many compromised/phished accounts as well as "trickle spam" that we otherwise couldn't detect because it was below our rate limits. Blocking outbound spam in real-time has prevented us from being blacklisted by any major ISPs."

John Martis, Executive Vice President,  
**Hostway**