



## World Club Travel

As part of a substantial reorganisation of its IT provision, World Club Travel was looking for comprehensive protection against email-borne viruses. The search led quickly to MessageLabs' anti-virus service — and since signing up, this City-based travel company is delighted never to have received another virus-infected email.

World Club Travel was founded in 1995 by travel expert Daniel Shahaf. His aim was to bring a refreshingly new, independent approach to business travel for corporate clients, backed by high qualities of service.

Having developed a strong portfolio of clients, predominantly in the insurance and advertising industries, the company continues to grow organically on the strength of high levels of customer satisfaction and repeat business.

Now based close to its core marketplace in the City of London, the company's exclusive focus on business travel is underpinned by highly sophisticated IT infrastructure.

### *Have MessageLabs' anti-virus service — will travel*

As a young, expanding business travel specialist, World Club Travel prides itself on a readiness to respond rapidly to clients' needs. A critical component of that capability is the company's email system — used for virtually all communications, from contact with clients and securing bookings to relaying update information and confirming travel arrangements.

'Email is so much easier and more cost-effective than the phone, especially when you're dealing with people all over the world,' says Marina Plessas, World Club Travel's Head of Web Development. 'Though it's only been around for a comparatively short time, we've already come to rely on email as our primary means of communication.'

'So it's absolutely vital that our system isn't knocked out by a virus attack. If our email were to go down now, we may as well switch off the lights. That's how crucial it is to us.'

*'For us the business case is quite simple: why struggle to achieve an expensive virus-free environment internally when you can buy in the MessageLabs service which offers 100 per cent protection at a fixed and predictable cost?'*

Marina Plessas,  
Head of Web Development,  
World Club Travel

### *The search for the most reliable anti-virus solution*

This critical reliance on email security was a key factor in the company's recent review of its IT infrastructure. Marina's first task when she joined World Club Travel early in 2001 was to head up the systems overhaul.

'It was a case of changing pretty well everything,' she says, 'from moving over to a new ISP and setting up a leased line to reviewing our internal systems. It was the search for the most reliable anti-virus solution that led us to MessageLabs. 'Until the time I arrived, the company was getting by in anti-virus terms by simply not opening any attachment which looked remotely dodgy. But you can't go on working like that for ever.

'In fact the company had been struck by a virus about six months before I joined and it was hard hit for a week as a result. So there was general recognition of the fact that we needed to do something to protect the business.

'On the other hand, we're still a small company and we'd rather not spend a lot of time updating signatures and firefighting the virus threat. So conventional in-house anti-virus protection alone was not the answer. It was obvious that we needed a comprehensive solution and that's what MessageLabs offered.'

### *Scanning for infected mail at Internet level*

World Club Travel signed up to MessageLabs' centrally-hosted anti-virus service in the spring of 2001. And, like every other MessageLabs customer, they report that all their email has been completely virus-free ever since.

The key, says Marina, is that email is scanned at Internet level and any viruses are stopped before they can penetrate internal systems.

'I really don't know how we ever managed without the MessageLabs service,' she says. 'The reports show that it is saving us from around five viruses every week.'

### *Extra protection for company image*

'The value to us is far more than just being spared the problems of signature updates and cleaning infected PCs. The service also ensures that we don't inadvertently send viruses on to our clients. We could easily lose an important corporate client by infecting their systems with a single bad email.'

World Club Travel's gateway processes around 100 emails each working day. It may be a relatively small number compared to larger organisations, but nonetheless critical.

Says Marina: 'We're a very good example of a small company. Since we don't have a dedicated IT team, it's all the more important that we can take care of problems like viruses without having to commit major resources.

'For us the business case is quite simple: why struggle to achieve an expensive virus-free environment internally when you can buy in the MessageLabs service which offers 100 per cent protection at a fixed and predictable cost?'

### *Up and running in a matter of days*

Peace of mind aside, what also impressed Marina was how simple the MessageLabs anti-virus service was to implement. At the time of the total system review she was dealing with a large number of IT suppliers — and MessageLabs, she says, stood out as the most helpful and supportive of all the companies she dealt with.

'The support was very impressive. MessageLabs made it so easy for us to set up the system. I just expected that it was all going to be a big hassle to get up and running — but everything happened very smoothly in a matter of days.

'Once we were connected there were follow-up emails and calls from MessageLabs' technical people, checking that all was well and that we were happy with the service. I've never had that from any other IT supplier.' In fact, MessageLabs is my absolute favourite IT company!'