Email delays

IT Status

We are once again experiencing issues with significant delays of email being delivered. This is primarily due to the mail servers being inundated with spam. For more a more detailed explanation, refer to the information on this page.

Virginia Tech continues to experience problems with mail routing.

The email delivery process is a multi-step solution:

- Email is received at Virginia Tech and routed according to specific routing protocols.
- Most email gets forwarded on to our Google Apps where the majority of users are (there are exceptions, which require special handling, such as users who have ITAR restrictions).
- Mail is typically delivered to the Google Apps service quite quickly, often in seconds and normally within a few minutes.

Certain factors can complicate the email delivery process, resulting in delays:

- Users who have forwarded their email from the VT Google Apps service to another provider have yet another hop, where the mail must then transfer back out of Google Apps and be returned to the email routers for processing to the users preferred final destination.
- If the user has forwarded their email to a non-Virginia Tech controlled host (e.g. Yahoo, Hotmail, or commercial Google mail at gmail.com [1]) then the email is subject to any delivery restrictions that the host has in place. In particular, gmail.com [1] has very strict restrictions on incoming spam. A great deal of email flowing through the university is spam. If that spam is sent to someone's vt.edu [2] account, and that account is forwarded to their gmail.com [1] account, it gets dutifully sent along to gmail.com [1]. If too much spam gets transferred to gmail.com [1], Google faults the Virginia Tech email router for the spam, and throttles down its transfer rate, or starts refusing to accept any more email until a timer they control expires and it's willing to try again.
- The repeated throttling and refusal on Google's part causes the queue, at times, to grow quite large. It can then potentially very significant delivery delays – hours or even days.
- This is an issue with any email service, but it's especially egregious with gmail.com [1] in part due to their extremely strict anti-spam policies, and in part due to the sheer number of users we have that have chosen to forward their email away from Google Apps email at vt.edu [2] to a private account at gmail.com [1].

What the Mail Team is doing to address these issues:

We are actively working with Google to explore solutions; however there is not a quick fix. We ask for your patience while we attempt to resolve the issues.

Service Degraded

Created: Fri, 05/16/2014 - 8:57am Resolved: Tue, 05/27/2014 - 12:41pm Duration: 1 week 4 days 3 hours 3854 Views
Source URL: https://computing.vt.edu/content/email-delays-4

Links: