



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Limpopo provincial government creates top-down security with Mimecast

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Victor Takalo, Director, Information and Communications Technology, Limpopo Office of the Premier

Business Case

As part of an e-government strategy implementation plan, the Limpopo provincial government in South Africa wanted to consolidate the online presence of its departments and amplify security and email continuity. Amid a pandemic lockdown, this required building infrastructure to allow for remote work and secure devices on a common platform, while allowing for each department's operational differences and budget constraints.

Results

Mimecast brought most of the Limpopo government under one digital roof, built email backup and added archiving capabilities. At the same time, it enhanced protections for employees, whether they are working on-premises or remotely on their own devices. The company also improved email security awareness among end users, which relieved pressure on IT staff, who no longer spend the bulk of their time addressing email alerts and malware issues.

Data Points

- Email filters have provided valuable spam protection, blocking 6.9% of incoming emails, and alerts and notifications have augmented end-user awareness.
- Filters have stopped 43,552 impersonation attacks, 18,073 attempts to plant malware and 1,902 phishing attempts using unsafe URLs or malicious attachments in the most recent 12-month period.
- IT staff spend far less time addressing complaints of malware and email issues, affording them the time to engage in training and other proactive activities.

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When I meet techs, they will always tell me that, ‘Since we have had Mimecast, we no longer have calls on emails. [Mimecast] is just something else.’ It has reduced quite a lot of work for them.”

Victor Takalo, Director, Information and Communications Technology, Limpopo Office of the Premier

The essential work of government depends on email and digital communication, even more so today with the popularity of contactless services and remote work brought on by COVID-19. In the early days of the pandemic lockdown, the government of the South African province of Limpopo decided to work with Mimecast to upgrade its email services, consolidate the online presence of its 11 government departments and step up its cybersecurity posture.

Limpopo is South Africa’s northernmost province on the border with Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Botswana. It is known for its natural resources and for being the gateway for visitors to Kruger National Park. The government is in the middle of a five-year development plan that began in 2020 and includes partnerships with local and international companies.

Before it tackled its e-government strategy implementation plan, the provincial government had depended on Microsoft Outlook for its email, while the Office of the Premier used Lotus Notes. Each of its departments — including transportation, health, public works and education — had its own URL and website and relied on the protections built into its individual email platform.

“We said, ‘It’s best that we consolidate and make sure that we have a shared service, that whatever we implement in department A is also implemented in department B, so we have a common platform,” said Victor Takalo, director of information and communications technology at the Limpopo Office of the Premier.

By doing so, the public’s access to government services would be streamlined under the same web address, [Limpopo.gov.za](https://www.limpopo.gov.za), and internal functions would be standardized, he added. Just as importantly, the move to a common platform would upgrade email functionality and improve security across nearly 11,000 government users.

The Limpopo government launched a search for a solution to augment its email gateway; the decision would eventually involve officials at the top levels of the provincial government. Takalo consulted with some of his peers in other provincial governments, and they all recommended Mimecast. One colleague in particular, a 10-year Mimecast customer in the province of Gauteng, told him how Mimecast’s continuity protection had kicked in during a recent email outage.

“I said, ‘You know what? There’s no better solution that we can use out there than Mimecast,’” Takalo said.



With Mimecast’s secure email platform, awareness training and continuity tools, any central government administrator can monitor a diverse infrastructure across multiple departments.

Click here to learn more about Mimecast’s complete suite of security solutions.

For more information about the Limpopo Province Office of the Premier, [visit its website.](#)

Email Continuity And Productivity Sway The Decision

The need for email continuity, backups and archives was a top priority, operationally as well as for security reasons, Takalo noted. By adopting Mimecast, Limpopo's government built the backstop necessary to support each department if its email gateway experienced an outage. This avoids the lose-lose scenario of suffering downtime or adding risk when users switch to less-secure personal email accounts to keep up with their work.

The ability to integrate with other email gateways was also a key factor in choosing Mimecast, as was the ability to send large email attachments securely, facilitating collaboration among remote workers, Takalo said.

All told, the government acquired multiple Mimecast email protection products, including [Secure Email Gateway](#) and [Mailbox Continuity](#); productivity tools, including [Sync & Recover](#) and Large File Send; and tools to improve its overall security posture, including [Awareness Training](#), [Targeted Threat Protection](#) and [DMARC Analyzer](#).

"We needed to make sure that we were secured and could continue working as a province, to send and receive emails," Takalo explained. "When we did our own research, we realized that the only platform that is secured and we can have continuity on is Mimecast."

Strong Relationships Lead to Smooth Deployment

Mimecast personnel worked side by side with IT leaders in all the Limpopo provincial departments in a very collaborative process that addressed all of Limpopo's concerns, Takalo said. "You would think that we knew each other from long ago and [that] we've been working together for a long time," he said.

Takalo praised the Mimecast team for its helpful, can-do attitude; the staff was always ready with solutions and additional training as needed, he said. For example, when Limpopo's team had questions about how to log and follow up on service calls, the Mimecast team arranged for extra training to show them what to do.

"They are always there to assist you, whenever there is any challenge," Takalo said. "Whenever you are not sure about something, they come in and try to come up with a better solution to approach whatever challenges we'll be having."

Awareness Training Yields Results

Many of the Mimecast protections have become seamless to users, noted Takalo. "Some don't even realize that Microsoft is down because automatically Mimecast [protections] kick in, and they just continue working normally without realizing that," he said.

Each department runs its own monthly awareness training programs to educate users, greatly improving security awareness. Alerts and reports sent to users about suspect links and attachments have also made them more conscious about how they use their email, reducing the occurrence of spam and use of personal email.

“Users stopped just clicking everywhere,” Takalo said. “If something is suspicious, then they will just take a screenshot, send it to IT and say: ‘I’ve received this and I think it’s not safe. Can you check for me?’”

Email filters have blocked 6.9% of incoming emails in the most recent 12-month period. At the same time, the Mimecast platform also stopped 43,552 impersonation attacks, 18,073 attempts to plant malware in the system and 1,902 phishing attempts using unsafe URLs or malicious attachments. As a result, IT staff has been able to focus on more proactive ways to improve efficiency and security, such as adopting centralized printing and digitizing other functions, Takalo said.

“Since we have implemented Mimecast, I can rest assured that techs have no longer been going to user machines who complain about email or complain about their machines having malware and so on,” he said. “It has reduced a lot of work for the techs within the departments.”

All told, choosing Mimecast has proved to be the absolute right decision for the government of Limpopo, Takalo said. “If you are not sure, talk to my end users, and they will tell you how much Mimecast means to them,” he said. “I’m definitely sure they would tell you that it has been a good experience making them aware of the security that we took for granted.”