



## BLaST IU 17: Pennsylvania School District

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

### PROFILE SNAPSHOT

Organization:

[BLaST IU 17](#)

Industry:

[Education](#)

Licensed Users:

[4,250](#)

Abaca Solution:

[Multiple EPG 1000s  
with ReceiverNet™  
Premium Service](#)

Abaca Protected

Customer Since:

[2007](#)

### Maximum spam blocking, minimum system administration... the perfect solution for a school district's growing problem

In the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, school districts are organized into 29 Intermediate Units (IUs). One of the largest geographical IU's is BLaST 17, an IU that covers 4,000 square miles and comprises 19 school districts with approximately 36,000 students.

More than just an umbrella organization, BLaST IU 17 is an education service agency whose mission is to deliver effective, efficient and economical services to the school districts in its intermediate unit. As a liaison between local school districts and state government, the intermediate unit also provides services that include early childhood intervention programs, professional development workshops and training, services for special needs students, and technology and business services.

#### Public email address hammered by spam

Because BLaST IU 17 is a large education service agency with a public mission, the email addresses of many of its departments and employees are public as well. So in the course of reaching out to students, parents, teachers, and administrators in its 19 school districts, BLaST IU 17 became an easy target for spammers.

For Jon Paulhamus, assistant director of technology at BLaST IU 17, the problem wasn't just professional, it was personal too. "I was getting 75 to 100 spam messages a day," he recalled. "And I was by no means the hardest one hit."

Although BLaST IU 17 had an email filter in place, some email users were receiving hundreds of spam messages every day. One mailbox often received upwards of 500 spam messages a day!

Over a five-year period, BLaST IU 17 tried several popular email filters. As time progressed, they had only marginal success in blocking spam. Some filters didn't work well at all; others worked initially but then gradually lost their effectiveness. Meanwhile, the spam kept coming.

#### Abaca's no-risk guarantee seals the deal

Hoping to find a more effective solution to BLaST IU 17's spam problem, Paulhamus did a Google search that led him to the Abaca Email Protection Gateway. Two things jumped out at him right away: Abaca's quarantine feature for individual users and the company's guaranteed 99 percent accuracy in blocking spam.

"The individual user's quarantine was a big issue for us," said Paulhamus. "With this feature, users can go in themselves and retrieve any messages that should not have been blocked. It makes life much easier for them and for us."

Although some other anti-spam solutions also offer this feature, what sealed the deal for Paulhamus was Abaca's guarantee of 99% accuracy.

*“Our spam problem went away immediately...within 48 hours, email users started coming up and thanking me for eliminating all the spam from their mailboxes.”*

**- Jon Paulhamus**  
Assistant Director of  
Technology

“When I found out we could trial the solution for 30 days that clinched the deal for me because the trial period essentially removed the financial risk.”

### Maximum spam blocking with minimum system administration

Paulhamus received his trial Email Protection Gateway appliance from Abaca in February 2007. He made all the configuration changes necessary for the BLaST IU 17 firewall and installed the Abaca hardware/software appliance on his department's email network. The entire process took about 10 minutes.

“This product is incredibly easy to roll out,” said Paulhamus. “You can literally have it up and running in just a few minutes.”

But even more impressive than its ease of installation was the spam-filtering accuracy the Abaca Email Protection Gateway began providing that same day. “Our spam problem went away immediately,” recalled Paulhamus. “Within 48 hours, email users started coming up and thanking me for eliminating all the spam from their mailboxes.”

A month after installing the Abaca Email Protection Gateway in his 450 email user organization, Paulhamus began telling some of their school districts in BLaST IU 17 about it. Soon 13 more school districts had installed Abaca Email Protection Gateway appliances.

“Abaca's Email Protection Gateway works incredibly well,” said Paulhamus. “The administrator dashboard shows that we're getting 6,000 to 15,000 spam messages an hour—in one district alone. But all of that spam is now effectively blocked by Abaca.”

And unlike other anti-spam solutions his organization tried earlier, Paulhamus noted that Abaca's Email Protection Gateway stands up over time. “Instead of losing its effectiveness after a while, it actually gets better and becomes more accurate the longer we use it. There's no way we would take it out now!”

Abaca's outstanding technical and sales support has also made Paulhamus confident about propagating the Email Protection Gateway throughout the geographically dispersed BLaST IU 17 organization.

“Abaca's tech support is so good it's unreal,” he said. “Any time I need something, I get a response in ten minutes, and a solution in thirty. Our account team is fantastic too. They're very flexible and great about shipping product to us quickly. I talk with our account reps all the time, and if there's anything I need, they're right on it.”

“The appliances pretty much take care of themselves—and that's good, because the less time I have to spend maintaining a product, the more effective it actually is!”



#### Abaca Technology Corporation

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Case Study  
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### About Abaca®

Abaca Technology Corporation is an innovator in email protection and messaging security. Abaca's patent-pending technology, ReceiverNet™, offers an advanced approach in the fight against spam — providing unprecedented levels of accuracy and guaranteeing 99 percent spam filtration. Abaca has created a portfolio of innovative products and services based upon this core technology, thereby assuring users unparalleled messaging protection from spam, as well as viruses and phishing attacks. Abaca is a privately held company headquartered in San Jose, California. For more information about Abaca, please visit [www.abaca.com](http://www.abaca.com).

To learn more or request a free evaluation, call us at 877.462.2222 or email [info@abaca.com](mailto:info@abaca.com).