

Graylisting works because spammers usually configure their servers to not bother with the second attempt. Thus, the graylist filter knows that if a second copy of the email arrives after the initial rejection, the mail is probably legitimate.

The drawback of graylisting is that the first time you receive an email from a new sender, the email will be delayed. Many users find that the benefit of graylisting is not worth the cost of the delayed emails, so they simply disable the graylist filter.

Looking at Three Types of Antispam Software

The many different antispam programs that are available fall into three broad categories: on-premises, appliance, and cloud based (hosted). The following sections describe the relative merits of each of these approaches to providing antispam for your organization.

On-premises antispam

An on-premises antispam program runs on a server on your network and interacts directly with your email server. Email that arrives at your server is passed over to the antispam program, which evaluates the email to determine whether it's spam or legitimate mail. The antispam software uses a variety of techniques to identify spam and can usually be configured for optimal performance. Email that is identified as legitimate is handed back to the email server for normal processing. Depending on how you configure the software, email that is identified as spam may be sent to your users' Junk folders or stored in some other location.

In smaller organizations, the antispam software can run on the same server as the email server (for example, Microsoft Exchange). In larger organizations, the antispam software can be configured to run on its own dedicated server, separate from the mail server(s).

Here are some of the advantages of using an on-premises antispam product:

- » **You have complete control over the configuration and operation of the software.** Most on-premises antispam software is highly configurable, often providing a dozen or more distinct filtering methods, which you can customize in many different ways. (For more information, see the section "Understanding Spam Filters," earlier in this chapter.)