

- » The appliance may provide other security features, such as antivirus and firewall protection. Thus, a single appliance can handle many of your network's security and protection needs.

Using an antispam appliance is not without its disadvantages:

- » Eventually, you'll outgrow the appliance. For example, if the number of users on your network doubles, you may run out of disk space.
- » If the appliance fails, you may have trouble getting it back up and running. When a normal Windows server fails, you can usually troubleshoot the problem. But because of the self-contained nature of an appliance, troubleshooting it can be difficult when it's nonresponsive.

Cloud-based antispam services

A cloud-based antispam service (also called *hosted antispam*) is an Internet-based service that filters your email before it ever arrives at your mail server. When you use hosted antispam, you reconfigure your public DNS so that your mail server (the MX record) points to the cloud-based antispam server rather than to your mail server. That way, all email sent to your organization is first processed by the servers at the antispam service before it ever arrives at your mail server. Only those emails that are deemed to be legitimate are forwarded to your mail server; spam emails are stored in the cloud, where they can be reviewed and retrieved by your users if necessary.

Typically, you pay for hosted antispam based on how many users you have. For example, you might pay a monthly fee of \$2 per user. As your organization grows, you simply purchase additional subscriptions.

Here are some of the main advantages of using cloud-based antispam:

- » You get to skip the hassle of installing and configuring software, integrating the software with Exchange, maintaining and patching the software, and all the other chores associated with hosting your own server on your own premises. Your monthly subscription charges cover the cost of someone else doing all that work.
- » Because you don't have to buy software or hardware, there is no initial investment. You simply subscribe to the service and pay the monthly service charges. (As an added bonus, if you're dissatisfied with the service, you can easily move to a different one. Switching to a different antispam appliance or on-premises solution is a much more complicated and expensive affair.)