

## Norcal Waste Lowers IT Costs and Increases Time for Higher Value Projects with Google Security



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**Ivan Jackson**  
Network Manager



*People • Service • Environment*  
**NORCAL WASTE SYSTEMS, INC.**  
*Proud to be Employee Owned*

### ABOUT GOOGLE APPS

Google Apps is a suite of applications that includes Gmail, Google Calendar (shared calendaring), Google Talk (instant messaging and voice over IP), Google Docs & Spreadsheets (online document hosting and collaboration), Google Page Creator (web page creation and publishing), Start Page (a single, customizable access point for all applications) and Google Security & Compliance. Google Apps offers editions tailored to specific customer needs, including the Standard Edition (ideal for family domains), Education Edition (K-12 schools, colleges and universities) and Premier Edition (businesses of all sizes).

For more information, visit  
[www.google.com/a/security](http://www.google.com/a/security)

### Company

Norcal Waste is the largest employee-owned company in the solid waste industry, providing waste management services to more than 570,000 residential and 55,000 commercial customers.

Norcal is parent to two dozen subsidiaries providing solid waste services to more than 50 communities and the exclusive service provider in San Francisco, California. Norcal provides the highest level of service in the industry – a commitment born when the company was established in 1921.

Norcal delivers some of the most innovative recycling programs in the country including material recovery facilities, construction and demolition debris recycling, and large-scale composting of food and organic wastes, and the company is constantly testing new ways to improve and increase recycling.

### Approach

Information Technology (IT) means many things to Norcal, but primarily it means efficiencies; efficiencies in landfill management, weigh-scale operations, transaction speed, and more. After automating its business systems in 2000, they have become a 24 hour operation. As a result, their window for IT maintenance projects has gone from over 12 hours a day to just a few hours a month. As a result, the six person IT operations staff needed relief from the daily drudgery of managing their web filtering solution. In addition, spyware infections were on the rise, even though the company already had enterprise anti-virus and anti-spyware systems in place, Norcal needed to make a change.

“Our existing list-based URL filter was not protecting us and required constant changes – it just didn’t match our focus on efficiency,” said Ivan Jackson, Network Manager for Norcal.

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### Solution

Norcal selected Google Web Security for Enterprise service, powered by Postini, to enforce their appropriate use policies and to protect their network and business data from new and known threats. They trialed the solution in May 2007 and went live for the whole company in June 2007.

“Our old URL filter solution was going to require us to upgrade to newer technology,” said Jackson. “We didn’t want the overhead and costs of the infrastructure so we looked at Google. Set-up was easy and it does what it says it does.”

## Results

Within a week of going live, the solution caught several new, unknown viruses: one hidden in a bogus greeting card link and another when a user visited the website of a local limousine service.

“One of our employees was trying to rent a limousine for the weekend. A piece of spyware was hidden in one of the widgets on that site and Google blocked it right then and there,” said Jackson. “Both our network and our business operations are protected from this junk.”

Managing the system used to be a time-consuming chore. Typical duties, often performed each day, included SQL database maintenance and backup verification, checking the filtering update logs, maintaining the Microsoft ISA cache, applying hot fixes and upgrades (for the filtering software, SQL database, and ISA server), and applying hardware updates as required. In addition to all this work, The IT operations staff had to duplicate this environment in their disaster recovery site. Now, with the Google Web Security for Enterprise service in place, the only time they have to touch the system is to add or change a user or pull the odd report.

Continued Jackson, “We repurposed the hardware, retired a SQL database and the associated tape back ups, and reduced overall power consumption in the data center. Less significant, but worth mentioning, is the reduction in the number of Microsoft security patches that needed to be applied and tested each month.”

With the previous on-premise solution, Norcal had to wait for vendor-supplied database and software updates and patches as well as having to do maintenance and back up on the reporting database. “We don’t have to wait on the vendor for updates anymore. It all just happens in the background. The maintenance requirement is totally off our shoulders now,” said Jackson. “It just doesn’t make sense to do this in house anymore.”

The value of having protection from phishing and web-borne viruses was driven home at the executive level. A senior executive happened to click on a link to what looked to him to be the valid web based service bureau. It turned out to be a redirect to a phishing site that had malware. The Google service detected this attack and successfully blocked the new, unknown malware. “The executive was surprised at having been tricked by the site but he was also pleased with our decision to choose Google.”

