

# Anti-Spam Solutions – January 2009

*Comparative Testing: Appliances, Software and Hosted Service Solutions*

## Anti-Spam Test Results

West Coast Labs performed a comparison test on a range of email solutions (appliances, software, and hosted service solutions) to measure their relative spam detection rates over a series of at least 100,000 genuine spam emails using West Coast Labs real-time spam feed.

The following table highlights the spam detection rates of each solution. The False Positive detection rates for each solution were also calculated, and were negligible across each of the solutions, except Microsoft, which recorded a significant False Positive rate of 0.71%.

Vendor	Spam Catch Rate
Trend Micro (hosted)	96.71%
Trend Micro (software)	96.48%
Symantec	95.73%
IronPort	95.63%
Sophos	94.63%
Microsoft	93.89%
Websense	88.25%
Barracuda	88.07%
Fortinet	61.96%
McAfee	59.66%

## Test Methodology

Each of the solutions was tested against the West Coast Labs live enterprise spam feed, multiplexed across each of the solutions, so that each solution received the same emails. Testing was conducted over a total of 6 days.

Each solution under test was configured in accordance with the vendor's instructions, and was allowed to download the latest updates prior to the commencement of testing. During the course of the test period, signature updates were allowed. It should also be noted that no performance training was conducted on any of the solutions during the testing.

The overall test results are based on an analysis carried out against a subset of 50,124 spam messages and 4,249 genuine messages sent through each of the devices.

*The catch rates and false positives calculated were based upon the following formulae:*

*Spam detection rate = (spam marked as spam / total spam) \* 100*

*False Positive rate = (genuine marked as spam / total genuine) \* 100*



## West Coast Labs Observations

This test was performed with no ongoing training—a step usually recommended by most anti-spam vendors. Instead this test was configured based on out-of-box configurations using the vendor's recommended settings to mimic the customer experience after initial purchase. With a period of training and ongoing maintenance, these figures are likely to be different and result in an improvement to detection rates or False Positive rates as appropriate.

Overall, both of the solutions provided by Trend Micro for this test demonstrated better protection rates for end users using this live test set against the other solutions tested. With a period of training, customers can expect to receive an even higher effectiveness from these products.

Full details of the products, test methodology and results data can be found in the West Coast Labs Test Report which is available for download at:  
[www.westcoastlabs.com/producttestreports](http://www.westcoastlabs.com/producttestreports).

**Footnote:** While West Coast Labs is dedicated to ensuring the highest standard of security product testing in the industry, it is not always possible within the scope of any given test to completely and exhaustively validate every variation of the security capabilities and/or functionality of any particular product tested and/or guarantee that any particular product tested is fit for any given purpose.

Test results published within any given report should not be taken and accepted in isolation. Potential customers interested in deploying any particular product tested by West Coast Labs are recommended to seek further confirmation that the said product will meet their individual requirements, technical infrastructure and specific security considerations.

All test results represent a snapshot of security capability at one point in time and are not a guarantee of future product effectiveness and security capability. West Coast Labs provide test results for any particular product tested, most relevant at the time of testing and within the specified scope of testing and relative to the specific test hardware, software, equipment, infrastructure, configurations and tools used during the specific test process.

West Coast Labs is unable to directly endorse or certify the overall worthiness and reliability of any particular product tested for any given situation or deployment.

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