

Incident Report - July 10th, 2015

Incident #2015-86

Summary

On July 10th, 2015, the Infrastructure Operations team was notified by the IT Support Center and multiple departments that mail from external sources was not being delivered to queensu.ca addresses. This was caused by a misconfiguration of the Mail Exchange Record (MX record) for queensu.ca. The incident lasted from 4:00 pm on July 9th until 9:00 am July 10th. Mail continued to be delayed after 9:00 am due to the backlog of messages that required processing, until around noon on July 10th.

Impact

During this incident, faculty, staff and students saw emails sent from external sources delayed by up to 24 hours after originally sent.

Root Cause

While the Infrastructure Team was performing security patching on the Barracuda spam filters, the MX record was modified to prevent email disruption. After patching was completed, the MX record was not restored correctly due to inaccurate documentation and lack of proper validation. After the MX record was restored further mail delays occurred as the backlog of messages were delivered.

Resolution

IT Services was able to fix the MX record for queensu.ca a short time after the issue was identified. Infrastructure team contacted Barracuda Network Support to help with improving the speed of mail delivery.

Communications (Internal)

Members of the Infrastructure Operations Team coordinated communication with the ITS Support Centre. The Infrastructure Operations team worked with the Systems team to resolve the issue.

ITSPC Communications (External)

The IT Support Center posted the initial notice to the Notification section of the ITS webpage at 8:43 am, which also sent out an email to ITSNOTICE-L that there was a mail delivery issue. A new message was sent out at 10:00 am by the Infrastructure Team with more information; however, with the mail delay, the notices were also delayed to end users. The notice was updated at 2:39 pm indicating that service had been fully restored.

Lessons Learned

- Review documentation more frequently; review should be conducted by multiple groups as required.
- Documentation should include a validation process to follow.

Action Items

- Systems and Infrastructure team to review the procedures and rewrite documentation to include validation steps.