



Security and backup like no other, for Babbage Consultants

As a multi-disciplinary architectural and engineering consultancy, Babbage Consultants stakes its reputation in the industry on being 'forward thinking, confident and expert.' Based in Auckland, Babbage also has consultancies in Hamilton, Wellington, Christchurch and Melbourne, with a team of over 200 staff. Email security has always been a priority, with valuable intellectual property to protect, and they use the full SMX email security suite - inbound and outbound email filtering, custom rules engine and SMX cloud email archive.

Babbage Consultants was started by Alistair Babbage as a civil engineering firm, in Auckland in 1936. Interestingly, he was the great-grandson of Charles Babbage, who is credited with originating the concept for the first digital programmable computer.

The practice offers tailored consultancy services spanning architecture, engineering, land development and project management. They are well known for their project management abilities, and Babbage Consultants wins the majority of project management business for the dairy industry.

Babbage Consultants' IS and IT Manager, Alan Courtenay, heads a team responsible for building and maintaining the company's networks and business systems.

Back in the mid-90s Alan developed Babbage's peer-to-peer network. They had just two email addresses for all business email, and email security at the time was non-existent. But over the years, security quickly developed, with the need to protect their valuable intellectual property.

Alan and his team implemented 'Inversible', a product developed by the Israeli military and one of the first systems capable of scanning email content to identify threats. They then became one of the first adopters of ESET NOD32.

Alan says Babbage Consultants moved to SMX for email filtering around seven years ago, following a visit from SMX that impressed him: "We were visited by an SMX person, who laid out the whole mail exchange and the SMX proposition. I liked what I saw," he says simply.

"I've not worked with any other company quite like SMX. With others, you feel you have to tell them how to get their balance right. SMX just works."

Alan Courtenay

IS & IT Manager, and Senior Associate
BABBAGE CONSULTANTS

Alan says a large proportion of the email sent to Babbage is spam. Though with SMX, very little of it gets through. Email is delivered clean and Alan and his team can see clearly, through the console, what has been cleaned, quarantined and so on. "It just works. It's great," Alan says.

"Anything that gets through the filters, we send back to SMX. They tweak the rules and it just stops. There are really helpful tools that help us manage our own mail, and also client mail - e.g. whitelisting. It's interesting that when things go wrong with email, it's your fault, not the clients'! With SMX we can whitelist clients' email and explain to them what they need to change at their end."

Alan says he and his team have a great working relationship with the SMX service desk: "SMX is straightforward to use. Support is right there if you can't get it quite right. They usually deal with issues within an hour and send a helpful note explaining what was wrong and what was done to rectify it. That's one big tick for me - they are always there. I can give you a long list of companies that don't work like that - and that's why I've moved away from them, to be honest."

"There has been very little downtime over the years; the reliability of the SMX systems is very high. They keep us aware of any issues. The transparency is great! Other companies we've worked with, getting them to even admit there was a problem you'd almost have to pull teeth."

Enhanced email security with custom rules engine

In 2015 Babbage began to use SMX's custom rules engine. It enhances email security by delivering sophisticated content control and data loss prevention through configurable rules tailored to an organisation's needs.

It's a constantly evolving product, which can be adapted to meet the demands and challenges of a changing threat landscape (e.g. phishing and whaling attacks), and in response to feedback and requests from customers.

SMX's responsiveness to the changing threat landscape is something Alan appreciates. Babbage's senior executives have recently been targets of whaling attacks but SMX's whaling module quickly addressed the issue.

Secure email archiving

In 2016, SMX offered Babbage Consultants a trial of the new SMX Cloud Email Archive service. With a requirement to keep email records for ten years, and to be able to access and retrieve email easily, Alan says the service was 'of particular interest' to him: "Legislative requirements around email archiving meant we had to establish an archive. It was getting big and cumbersome, so when SMX told us about their cloud-based archiving plans, I was very interested."

Alan is very happy with the performance of the SMX Cloud Email Archive solution. "Email storage and retrieval is very fast and simple - it's all done from one console. We can monitor everything. It's all just there and I'm confident everything is safe with SMX."

If there is any issue, SMX are upfront about it and they sort it out. The transparency is a breath of fresh air - you know what's going on. That's rare.

Alan Courtenay

Becoming a fully cloud-based business is a key goal for Babbage Consultants, Alan says, and SMX is part of that.

Future plans include moving the company to Office 365 Exchange Server. This will be done in consultation with SMX to integrate the SMX email security suite seamlessly with Office 365.

"I fully expect SMX will handle the project with no problems at all," Alan says.

Alan also appreciates SMX's commitment to and belief in what they do: "They stand on their product. There is no hard sell - you can take it or leave it.

"SMX is easy, reliable and my confidence in them is high. I recommend SMX to anyone," Alan Courtenay says.