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## A better spam-trap

The founders keep Network Management Group Inc. local because their roots are.

BY NICHOLAS JUNGMAN  
The Wichita Eagle

**HUTCHINSON** - A Hutchinson company's unique e-mail management solution has found a national audience and helped make the firm an industry leader in fighting spam.

Network Management Group Inc.'s system is called DoubleCheck. Company co-founder Steve Harper calls the system a "total e-mail management solution."

It not only filters out junk e-mail -- known as spam -- but also scans incoming and outgoing e-mail for viruses. It can filter out objectionable content, append all outgoing messages with a privacy or disclosure notice, and archive everything.

DoubleCheck comes in two flavors: on-site, with a hardware "appliance" that sits upstream from your mail server within your network; and off-site, with your e-mail stream routed through NMGI or a partner.

The DoubleCheck system was born out of necessity.

NMGI's main business is network consulting. In 2001, one of its network clients was having trouble: Its customers weren't getting any of its e-mail.

NMGI figured out that the client had been "blacklisted" as a spammer -- but not because it had been sending out spam. Instead, a spammer had hijacked the client's network to send junk e-mails.

To keep the client from being victimized again, NMGI created a system to monitor and filter the client's e-mail.

DoubleCheck was born. And Harper soon realized other clients might be interested.

"We gave out a few units to resellers, and before we could check back, they had sold those units," Harper said.

DoubleCheck has since found its way into networks around the country, from school systems to accounting firms to Las Vegas casinos to nuclear power plants.

Sales have roughly doubled every year, and DoubleCheck has gone from a six-figure business to a seven-figure one, said Scott Scrogin, NMGI's vice president for professional services.

And that growth has come without advertising. Instead, NMGI relies on word of mouth and its network of more than 100 resale partners in the United States and Canada.

Those partners -- typically computer consulting shops like NMGI -- can wrap DoubleCheck into a package of network management services for their clients.

Scrogin said the e-mail management market is thick with competition, with thousands of companies offering myriad solutions.

"DoubleCheck is unique in being one single solution," Scrogin said. It integrates the functions of what is often several different programs in some systems, and the whole service is managed by NMGI and its partners to ensure the customer's satisfaction.

NMGI likes to remind clients the company is "locally owned but nationally known."

Harper and co-owner Randy Johnston travel the country to work with clients and share their expertise with industry groups.

Harper sits on the advisory board for Hewlett-Packard Co. and works within other industry organizations. He's frequently quoted in industry publications as an expert on value-added reselling in the computer services industry.

Johnston spends much of his time with another company in which he and Harper are owners: K2 Enterprises, which advises the accounting industry on technology. Johnston speaks from coast to coast to groups of accountants.

This fall, Accounting Today magazine named Johnston one of its "Top 100 Most Influential People in Accounting" for the second year in a row.

As much as they travel, Harper is sometimes asked why the company stays rooted in Hutchinson. But Harper and Johnston, both Hutchinson natives, wouldn't have it any other way.

"Yeah, I could live near the Dallas airport," Harper said. "It would probably make a lot of sense.

"But Grandma would be really unhappy."

**Location:** 324 E. Fourth Ave., Hutchinson

**Founded:** 1991

**Owners:** Steve Harper and Randy Johnston

**Employees:** 20

**Businesses:** Harper calls NMGI a "technology general store"; many clients ask NMGI to manage all their technological systems. The company is a pioneer in e-mail security and management, with its DoubleCheck system, and in remote network management, using a system it calls NetCare.

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