

Comparing Meridius and IronPort

In order to provide faster and more reliable email delivery, efficient spam screening, and virus protection, CITS is in the process of implementing a new email-handling architecture to replace our current one. As part of this process, CITS is replacing the Meridius spam quarantine with an IronPort email security and spam quarantine solution.

The new IronPort interface will provide features comparable to those in Meridius. This document will highlight some of the differences between the Meridius and IronPort systems.

Feature	Meridius	IronPort
Email filter terminology	Meridius calls the filter categories Whitelist and Blacklist.	IronPort calls the filter categories Safelist and Blocklist.
Managing quarantined messages	Meridius allows four actions: release release and add to Whitelist delete delete and add to Blacklist	IronPort only allows three actions: release release and add to Safelist delete Blocklist additions must be done manually.
Using Wildcards in the email filter	Users could use the wildcard * when entering emails or domains in the Whitelist or blacklist. Users could enter * to their Whitelist to set Meridius to allow all messages through the filter.	The IronPort system does not accept wildcards when entering addresses in the Safelist or Blocklist. Users cannot totally override IronPort's filtering of certain spam and virus-containing messages.
Adding entries to the Safelist or Blocklist	Meridius accepted full and partial email addresses, domains, and usernames (like "jane") to be added to either list.	IronPort only accepts addresses in the following formats: user@domain.com, server.domain.com and domain
Number of entries in the Safelist or Blocklist	Meridius allows for 300 entries in whitelist and 300 entries in blacklist.	IronPort limits safelists and blocklists in a combined total and not individually. Users are allotted 500 entries total to use in their Safelist and/or Blocklist.
Blocklist action	When a message is blocked by Meridius, the sender receives an error message stating that their message could not be delivered.	IronPort puts the message in the user's quarantine. The sender does not receive any notification that their message was blocked.
Safelist action	When a message is sent from an address in your whitelist, Meridius will still scan a message for spam content. If a message is spam and is from a safe listed address, it still may be quarantined or dropped.	When a message is sent from an address in your safelist, IronPort will not scan the message for spam content. This does not prevent the message from being scanned by other filters, like message size or blocked content.
Quarantine notification message details	Meridius' quarantine notification message contains a link to the quarantine page.	IronPort's quarantine notification message contains a link to the quarantine page, a digest of the previous day's quarantined messages, and the web address of the quarantine page if the link does not work.
List mail and valid bulk emails getting caught as spam	Meridius may quarantine messages it considers "Bulk" mail, or mass mailings, even if they are legitimate messages.	IronPort will not automatically quarantine all bulk email messages or messages from listservs. The system will allow valid "Bulk" email messages through the filter. If users do not want to receive legitimate bulk email messages from vendors, they can unsubscribe from these lists.
Emails deleted from quarantine	In Meridius, emails deleted from quarantine are kept in the "Deleted Items" folder. This folder is emptied every evening; until then, the deleted messages are retrievable.	When you delete a message from your IronPort quarantine, it is permanently deleted.

QUESTION. Why did I receive an "IronPort SPAM Quarantine Notification" email?

ANSWER. The reason you are receiving an IronPort Spam Quarantine Notification message periodically is because the UMB Campus anti-SPAM filter has received emails addressed to you, and it suspects that the message may be SPAM email. The purpose of this system is to reduce the amount of unsolicited SPAM received in your Inbox. Please follow the link in the email message to review the email messages quarantined by IronPort. At times legitimate email messages may be quarantined. Users have the ability to release these messages from quarantine and add them to a Safelist.

QUESTION. How long does the IronPort system keep emails in quarantine?

ANSWER. 14 days or until the email is released or deleted, whichever comes first.

QUESTION. Can I retrieve an email once it has been deleted from quarantine?

ANSWER. No. Once emails have been deleted from quarantine, they cannot be retrieved.

QUESTION. How many email addresses or domains can I add to my Safelist or Block List?

ANSWER. You are allotted 500 entries total to use in either your Safelist or Blocklist.

QUESTION. Can I increase the number of emails or domains I can block or allow?

ANSWER. No. Users are only allotted 500 entries to use in either their Safelist or Blocklist. We suggest mainly using these entries for your Safelist. Spammers will often change the email address they are using to send SPAM, or spoof the email address they are using. As a result, adding an email address to your 'Blocklist' may not stop future SPAM.

QUESTION. I had many email addresses saved as 'allowed' email addresses or domains in Meridius. What happened to my allow list?

ANSWER. Unfortunately, because of technological constraints, there is no way to transfer users' Meridius Allow-lists to their new IronPort Safelists. Similar to Meridius, users have the ability to add emails and domains to their Safelist.

QUESTION. What should I do if I receive SPAM email in my inbox?

ANSWER. Occasionally, the IronPort System may not block a SPAM email message and that message will be delivered to your email Inbox. If you receive a SPAM email in your Inbox, first determine whether it is SPAM email or just a bulk email message from a legitimate vendor. If you have determined that a message is unsolicited SPAM email, find the email headers for the message and forward the message with email headers to spam@umaryland.edu. If you receive multiple and continuous SPAM messages from a specific email address or domain, you may want to add that email addresses to your Blocklist manually. Please note that spammers will often change the email address they are using to send SPAM, or spoof the email address they are using. As a result, adding an email address to your 'Blocklist' may not always stop future SPAM.

QUESTION. I am seeing SPAM emails from my own 'umaryland.edu' address! What is happening?

ANSWER. Most likely your email address has been 'spoofed'. Spoofing an email address is similar to writing a different return address on an envelope. It appears as though the letter or email was sent from a different address. If the messages sent with your spoofed address are undeliverable, you may also receive the bounce back error messages stating that a message could not be delivered. Spammers can 'harvest' email addresses from many different public locations such as public web pages or online directories. Viruses or Spyware can also infect a computer and harvest email addresses from address books stored on that computer. If you suspect that your computer has a possible virus, download updated virus definitions, run a virus scan and notify your System Administrators.

QUESTION. How do I 'turn off' IronPort scanning on my email account?

ANSWER. Unlike the Meridius System, the IronPort Safelist cannot be set to allow all messages through its scan. The level of SPAM email filtering is set by the Email Administrators for each email domain on campus. If you believe that the SPAM filtering level for your email domain is too strict or lenient, please contact your Email Administrator.

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QUESTION. Why am I receiving multiple IronPort Quarantine Notification emails?

ANSWER. The IronPort system will generate a quarantine folder for each email address that receives SPAM email. Even though you may use a primary address such as auser001@umaryland.edu, you may also have a secondary address such as auser@school.umaryland.edu that delivers email to the same inbox. When you access the email quarantine, check the upper-right corner of the page to see from which email address IronPort is quarantining messages.

QUESTION. I received a Quarantine Notification message, but when I checked the quarantine, it was empty. What happened to the messages that were quarantined?

ANSWER. It is possible that IronPort quarantined email sent to a distribution list. The corresponding Quarantine Notification was also sent to that distribution list's email address, which is then received by all the members of the distribution list. When you access the email quarantine, check the upper-right corner of the page to see from which email address IronPort is quarantining messages. If it was sent to a distribution list, it is possible that another member in that list has already checked and either deleted or released the messages in quarantine.

QUESTION. Why am I receiving a quarantine notification message from IronPort and Meridius?

ANSWER. The Meridius system will not be deactivated until all users are moved from Meridius to the IronPort system. Until the conversion process is complete, some users may receive quarantine notifications from both systems. Also, during the transition, different campus email domains will be converted at different times. If you normally receive mail at two different email addresses, you maybe receiving an IronPort quarantine notification for one address and a Meridius notification for the other until all domains have been converted.

QUESTION. Why doesn't IronPort quarantine the same messages that Meridius did?

ANSWER. The two systems use different algorithms to determine if a message is SPAM email. One of the main differences is that the Meridius system tended to quarantine bulk email messages regardless of their source. The IronPort system is set to allow the delivery of bulk email from legitimate sources, to prevent valid emails from being detained in quarantine. The two systems also manage emails from blocked senders differently. IronPort will also place emails from senders on your Blocklist in quarantine. Meridius does not put the message in quarantine. Meridius blocks the message and sends an error message to the sender informing them that their message was blocked.

QUESTION. I used to receive a Quarantine Digest Message from Meridius almost once a day. Why do I receive the IronPort quarantine notifications less frequently?

ANSWER. Like the Meridius System, IronPort will only send a Quarantine Notification email message only if emails have been quarantined from an account. Since IronPort uses different definitions to identify SPAM email, it quarantines messages at a different rate. Consequently, even though both systems check your quarantine for new messages daily, you may not receive an IronPort Quarantine Notification message at the same frequency you did with the Meridius system.