

**Platform:** ProofPoint Protection Server 5.0.2.150

**Issue:** What 'offensive' words are triggering email messages being flagged as "[Contains offensive language]"?

**Corrective Actions:** Adjust dictionary's count and/or weight  
Fix outbound email text and/or attachment content

To perform the corrective actions, you first need to know what is triggering the email firewall.  
Via the ProofPoint Web Interface:

- Select "Email Firewall" then "Rules"
- Select "Edit Rule" on the "Offensive Language" Rule.

Assume that the dictionary is called "offensivewords" for this example.

Check Quarantine message

Folder: Audit [or whatever quarantine folder you prefer]

Radio Button: Deliver Now [for post delivery reviews]

Change Subject: [Contains offensive language] \${Subject}

Change Message headers

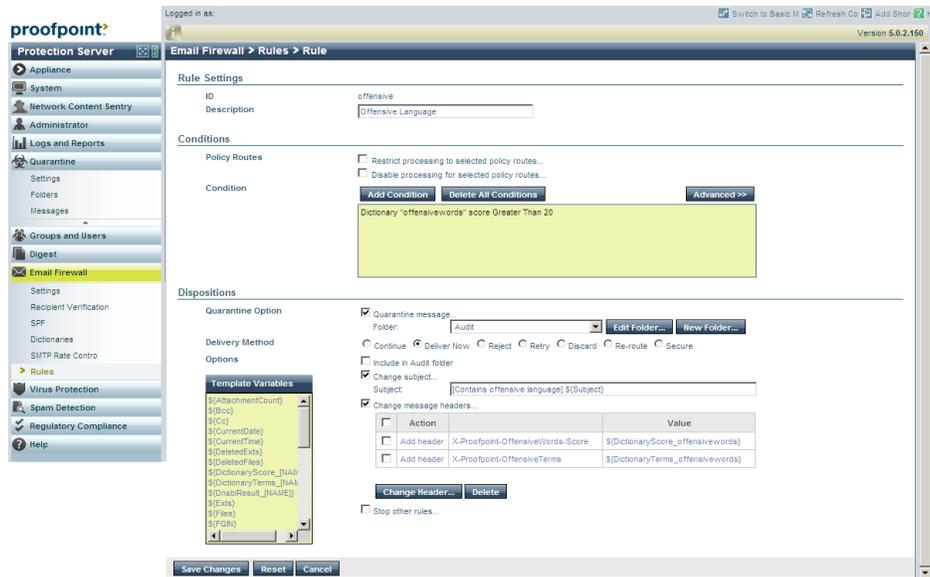
Add header:

Operation: Add Header  
Header Name: X-Proofpoint-OffensiveWords-Score  
Value: \${DictionaryScore\_offensivewords}

Add header:

Operation: Add Header  
Header Name: X-Proofpoint-OffensiveWords-Terms  
Value: \${DictionaryTerms\_offensivewords}

Save Changes



Based upon your individual dictionary words, counts, and weights, send an email with content that will trigger that rule and something similar should appear in the email headers:

X-Proofpoint-OffensiveWords-Score: 54

X-Proofpoint-OffensiveWords-Terms: 1:{snip},2:{snip},1:{snip},2:{snip},3:{snip}

To work through the corrective actions in ProofPoint dictionaries:

Select "Email Firewall" then "Dictionaries"

Select the appropriate dictionary, "offensivewords" in this example.

For each individual 'offensive' word, you can adjust whether you want every instance of counted and what that count should be. If "bobo" is in your dictionary and you only wanted it counted at most twice per email, providing a max score of 2 (Weight[1] x Count[2]):

Condition:	Case Insensitive Match
Word:	bobo
Weight:	1
Count every instance:	No
Count only the first:	2

Save changes

Based upon your individual company's culture, you may need to add words or modify the weights of a variety of the words in that dictionary.

You may want to disable the "X-Proofpoint-OffensiveWords-Terms" header after you've performed your corrective actions, which may double count the offensive words for other MTAs.

If you have any feedback for this white paper or any of the content, please email: [Whitepaper@SRedfield.com](mailto:Whitepaper@SRedfield.com).

[Proofpoint](#) is a leader in unified email security and data loss prevention, and produces the [Proofpoint Protection Server](#) which is the inspiration of this white paper.

[SRedfield Enterprises, Inc.](#) is a multi-faceted organization focusing on providing cost efficient solutions to your information, technology, and compliance needs.

This document is covered under [Creative Commons - Attribution-Share Alike 3.0](#).

Stew Redfield, CISA CISSP  
2009.02.16  
USA, MT, Kalispell

