EAB Makes Their Business Smarter and More Secure with Abnormal

Education solutions provider safeguards sensitive data, saves time with AI and automation for email security.

EAB works to make education smarter and communities stronger. The company partners with 2,500+ institutions—colleges and universities, K-12 schools, and major corporations—to improve student enrollment, leverage data analytics to develop educational success strategies, and support diversity, equity, and inclusion programs. "Our researchers, our services, and the platforms we offer help our partners serve their students better and provide insights to more effectively respond to challenges that are unique to higher education," said CISO Brian Markham.

The EAB Email Security Challenge

EAB's education partnerships are built on trust, including trust related to email security. "We want them to know that we take that responsibility seriously," Markham said. However, the company was struggling with advanced threats getting past the native email security tools in Microsoft 365, including spear phishing attacks and invoice fraud.

"We wanted to be able to better detect these messages, have a really low false positive rate, and do it without human intervention so we could spend our time on other security projects." Markham also wanted a fix for the problem of graymail, which wasted users' and investigators' time. However, he wasn't impressed by the standard security solutions on the market.

Industry	**Headquarters**
Educational Consulting	Washington, DC, USA

Employees	**Protected Mailboxes**
1,600+	3,400+

Customer Key Challenges

- Protect vast email networks that include high-value employee and customer data from advanced attacks.

- Prevent potentially costly invoice fraud and other BEC attacks without generating excessive false positives.

- Improve executive and employee productivity by filtering away time-wasting graymail messages.

Abnormal Products

- Inbound Email Security
- Email Account Takeover Protection
- Abuse Mailbox Automation
- Email Productivity

"We had the same issues with a product that cost us $100,000 a year as we did with our native email security tools: nasty stuff getting through, high false positives, and a lot of manual intervention required. Abnormal delivers the good stuff with none of the bad stuff."

Brian Markham
CISO

63
High-risk vendor email accounts identified.

1,927
Employee hours saved on graymail in 90 days.

Zero
False positives in 30 days.

The Abnormal Security Solution

While exploring possible solutions, Markham found one that piqued his interest, based on EAB's needs and his past experience as a social engineer. "I saw a feature on how Abnormal's behavioral AI was parsing messages like a human would. The fact that there was a technology that could parse a social engineering attack, find the malicious element, point it out to the analyst and say, 'I've already done something about it and this is why I did that'—I couldn't ignore that."

Further, Abnormal's API-based design made it easy to integrate with Microsoft 365. "They were able to get a POV up and running in a matter of hours, with no disruptions to email functionality," Markham said.

Why EAB Chose Abnormal

The POV showed how well Abnormal detects advanced threats. Said Markham, "The business case wrote itself. There were no hesitations about turning Abnormal on, and it's performed exactly as it did during the POV."

Markham gives the Abnormal dashboard high marks for ease of use. "Our security team can easily see what happened with a particular message and what triggered that action." Abnormal's team also provides exceptional support. "We can have a conversation with an actual person, and they analyze our experience. That has been a big part of why we like the tool."

In addition, the Email Productivity module saves EAB hundreds of hours each month by filtering graymail into a separate folder, which also reduces investigations of user-reported messages. "In addition to protecting their inboxes, Abnormal also protects their time," Markham said.

A Security Partnership Built on Trust

Abnormal has helped EAB improve its email security and operate more efficiently, which helps increase the value EAB can offer its partners. "Not only is our email security process more streamlined, but we have better controls in place and better tools to support us," Markham said. "We fundamentally trust the people that we work with at Abnormal, we trust the product, and we see the value that it provides. The Abnormal team has earned our trust and kept it over time."

"Abnormal Email Productivity reduced the number of user-reported emails, because those messages never hit the inbox. Our team has fewer false negatives to investigate, and users can access those messages in their promotions folder whenever they want. Everyone saves time, and people have noticed. The CEO mentioned it to me in the elevator, and I've been on calls where people say, "Can I just tell you how much I love that graymail protection?"

Brian Markham
CISO

abnormalsecurity.com →

Abnormal