

# message systems Case Profile

## Wired for Change Depends on Message Systems to Spread the Word of Progressive Organizations and Political Campaigns

A result of a merger between CGL Group and DemocracyInAction.com in 2006, Wired for Change was founded on the belief that technology can be a decisive force for social change. Wired for Change provides Web-based eCRM and online advocacy tools to progressive organizations and political campaigns. Wired for Change's hosted Salsa platform costs pennies on the dollar relative to the fees demanded by the private sector, providing a powerful communication option that enables mass email blasting, online advocacy campaigns, online event management and donation processing. Today, Wired for Change supports nearly 500 organizations serving nine million people.

### The byproducts of success: bottlenecks and blacklisting

Wired for Change clearly was on to something when they introduced their Salsa eCRM and advocacy tool in 2006 under the "software as a service" model. The response was overwhelming. Wired for Change would see their clients using Salsa to send between two-and-half and four million email messages per day. This volume of messages was well beyond the capacity of their original email delivery system, which could only send 100,000 messages per hour. Campaigns with lists containing one to two million addresses would literally take hours to send out.

Keeping their clients off ISPs blacklists was also a problem. Without a way to handle bounced messages, campaign mailings with a high number of bad addresses were increasingly landing Wired for Change and its clients on a variety of blacklists.

"We couldn't see the status codes on bounced messages from the ISPs, so we couldn't handle them," said Andy Tomasello, Director of Network Operations for Wired for Change. "Not having a way to get that information and use it to clean up the mailing lists caused a number of our clients to get blacklisted."

### Finding a better way

Wired for Change decided to investigate other email delivery systems in mid-2005. On the recommendation of fellow nonprofit associates at Moveon.org, Tomasello and his team included Message Systems in their evaluation. They moved quickly through the process, made their decision and completed the installation of Message System Delivery Manager by February 2006.

"Implementing Message Systems Delivery manager was as easy as install, configure and start the server," said Tomasello.

### Feeling the love from clients and ISPs

"The fast-paced world of politics has many demands," said Tomasello. "Many of our clients use email as their primary form of fund raising. Message Systems' Delivery Manager ensures that all emails are delivered quickly so

#### Client:



#### Wired for Change, Washington, D.C

- Industry: Technology for Political Organizations
- Founded: 2006
- [www.wiredforchange.com](http://www.wiredforchange.com)

#### Message Systems, Columbia, MD

- Email software solutions and services provider
- Serves ESPs, ISPs and large organizations
- [www.messagesystems.com](http://www.messagesystems.com)

*"Hands down, Message Systems is the best investment we've ever made."*

— Andy Tomasello

Director of Network Operations,  
DemocracyInAction

#### Key Benefits:

- 10x faster email delivery speed
- Improved bounce processing keeps client mailing lists clean and prevents ISP blacklisting
- Enhanced client satisfaction

# message systems

Message Systems, Incorporated  
7070 Samuel Morse Drive Suite 150  
Columbia, MD 21046  
Telephone: 410-872-4910  
Toll Free: (877) 887-3031 x312  
Fax: 410-872-4912  
[messagesystems.com](http://messagesystems.com)

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that our clients can meet their target window and their supporters can view the email at the most desirable times of day, which is particularly important for political campaigns dealing with time-sensitive issues.”

With Message Systems Delivery Manager in place, Wired for Change solved its sending speed problem. A campaign that used to take an hour to send now takes about five minutes, vastly improving customer satisfaction.

“No other solution even approaches Message Systems’ performance,” said Tomasello. “Our deliverability rate has increased tenfold—we are now able to deliver at least 1.4 million messages an hour compared to 100,000 an hour with the old solution. With mailing list sizes seeming to grow exponentially every few months, this has not only made our clients happy, but has reduced the workload and increased peace of mind for all of us involved in email delivery.”

Wired for Change and its clients are also benefiting from Message System’s automated bounce processing and reporting. “We are now able to process all bounces in real-time, which gives us much better control over what happens to those addresses,” said Tomasello.

Dealing with soft bounces is equally easy. In the past, messages would be marked by the recipient as Junk Mail, but Wired for Change couldn’t see it and would continue sending to that same address. Eventually, the ISP would blacklist the organization’s mail, preventing all of its clients’ mail from going through. Now, with visibility into why a soft bounce occurred, they now they can take appropriate action: removing addresses of people who have unsubscribed using their Junk Mail button.

“Thanks to Message Systems we’re now maintaining very clean lists and great relationships with the ISPs,” said Tomasello. “We’ve seen tremendous benefit from being able to see the status codes on bounced mail and being able to process the messages right away. Even though we’re sending ten times the number of messages per

hour than we could before, we’re sending them more efficiently and more accurately and we’re no longer getting blacklisted.”

Wired for Change is also benefiting from Message Systems responsive support services team. “The support we receive from Message Systems is phenomenal,” said Tomasello. “We have running joke that within five seconds of sending an email to support, we’ll get a message back. And it’s not just an automated confirmation message, it’s a personal response. Our systems administrators sing the praises of the Message Systems support team all day long.”

Message Systems has also provided strategic industry advice to Wired for Change. “Message Systems has advised us on everything from infrastructure to whitelisting strategies,” said Tomasello. “Message Systems has their finger on pulse of the email industry, and we know we can count on them to steer us in the right direction.”

### **What’s next?**

Wired for Change currently runs six nodes that funnel into one Message Systems Delivery Manager server, which is capable of efficiently handling the organization’s 30 million messages per month.

For the future, Wired for Change is considering implementing Message Systems’ clustering capability to provide automatic failover. “We’ll also be implementing authentication technology soon and utilizing some of the Message Systems APIs to stream straight from our Java-based application.”

“We chose Message Systems for a number of reasons,” said Tomasello. “Its delivery speed and automatic bounce processing were the initial drivers, but later we also came to appreciate the clean, easy-to-use web tools, seamless software updates, one-on-one training and amazing support. Hands down, Message Systems is the best investment we’ve ever made.”