

Security MFDs are here to stay

Vulnerable SMBs wake up to integrated appliances

Bijesh Kamath, New Delhi

Blended attacks require blended solutions. Security VARs are expecting the array of security appliances integrating anti-virus, firewall, IDS, content filtering and VPN in India to open up the SMB segment. The product category, first introduced by Symantec in mid-2002 with its Symantec Gateway Security, has so far been seeing a market only in the over 250-node user segment.

The integrated product do away with two issues faced by SMBs—customers no more need to worry about products not talking to each other, an issue with standalone devices. Also, most of these are 'plug and play' devices with minimal management hassles.

Peter Theobald, CEO, IT Secure, says, "Customers are looking at integrated security with either components of the security architecture talking to each other, or an integrated product that provides all functionality. Light footprint solutions are being preferred to building your own solution from the ground up."

Vishwajeet Deshmukh, CEO, Tas Integrators, a network management solutions company, says integrated security appliances is ideal for 50-100 user organizations as they have limited resources and budget constraints.

Among the vendors who now have integrated appliances are Sonicwall, WatchGuard, Symantec, Internet Security Systems, and Cisco. WatchGuard has its Firebox X series priced between Rs 1.3 lakh and Rs

4.8 lakh; Sonicwall its Global Security Client; Symantec its Gateway Security series; and Fortinet Fortigate. All are targeted at SMBs, though some vendors claim their products can fit all organizations.

All appliances come with different specifications, which reflect on the prices as well as the target customer segment. Symantec Gateway 300 series, launched in March and priced around Rs 35,000, has a VPN gateway, a stateful packet inspection (SPI) firewall, web filtering and intrusion-detection and prevention, anti-virus policy support, URL content filtering and traffic management. But it doesn't have the capability of handling high-density intrusion detection or content inspection.

WatchGuard's Firebox is mostly a firewall and VPN device, while Cisco's PIX has firewall, VPN and intrusion detection.

According to Jose Kurian, COO of Taarak India, depending on the configuration of the box, customers could save up to 50 percent what they would otherwise spend on standalone devices, hardware, software and maintenance costs considered. "SME customers may not want IDS, especially those who have been using firewall and anti-virus and finding that it takes care of their security needs. So for the security VAR, the integrated appliance with anti-virus, firewall and IDS gives an ideal opportunity to upsell."

Interestingly, vendors are no longer just harping on

the integrated features in the appliances being able to tackle blended attacks better. Till a few months back, with a slew of worm, virus, Trojan and hacker attacks—some of them difficult to detect—the integrated security appliances was paraded as the ideal line of defense. Now, the thrust is more on simpler management and reduced operational costs.

"The importance of ease of administration is being recognized, with the range of services being provided by IT increasing by leaps and bounds. What is being looked at is: how easy is it to manage, how much change will I have to introduce in my existing systems to incorporate this solution," says Theobald.

"The benefits of a single device are it simplifies management complexity, optimizes application performance and cuts operational costs to a great extent," says Rakesh Singh, GM, Asia Operations, NetScaler.

But then multi-function devices have always raised the issue of reduced throughput; that the single solution for many security ills is also a single point of failure and adversely impacts a network's

performance.

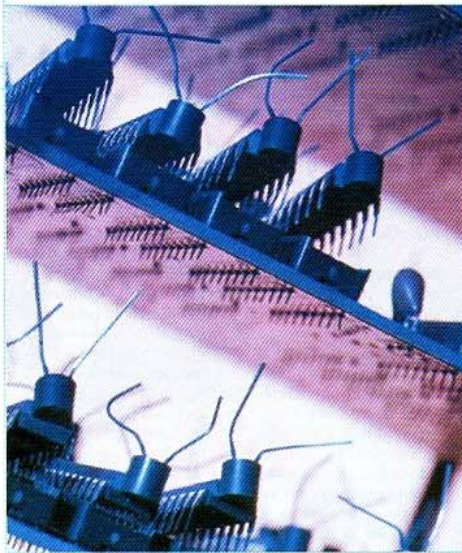
Gurdip Sethi, country manager, Netcontinuum, an application gateway security appliance vendor, says, "In the multi-appliance or module scenario, the reliability of the overall system is as robust as the reliability of the weakest link in the chain: be it hardware or software module or the interface between the modules."

Sethi says there's little to worry since most of the interface issues between the various functionalities in the integrated appliances have been made robust through the design and testing processes before the products are shipped out. Also, says Taarak's Kurian, if high availability is indeed an issue, customers can go for two devices.

Sethi says, "An appliance with its own specifically designed hardware, like an ASIC (application-specific integrated circuit), can deliver performance lot better than the software solutions on general purpose machines, or hardware solutions based on off-the-shelf components."

Vishak Raman, country manager of security

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"Indian market will be prompt in adopting new technologies"

Caddy Tan, regional director, Legato Software, South Asia Operations is responsible for sales in ASEAN countries and India. He holds a bachelor's degree in Computer Engineering from the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. Tan spoke to Yashvendra Singh.

►How has business changed for Legato after its acquisition by EMC?

It is a win-win situation for both the parties. Legato can leverage EMC's strengths in the storage industry, technology, customer base, R&D, etc. On the other hand, EMC can leverage an array of software management products fitting well into their ILM framework and a channel base.

►Post acquisition, will this mean a change of business strategy?

Our business strategy will remain unchanged.

►What are Legato's moves to increase market share?

Investment plans are being worked out. We will double our people presence in 2004 and also increase channel base. Currently, India accounts for 10 percent of APAC sales but we see it increasing.

►Name the verticals the company plans to focus on.

Some focused verticals are telecom, BFSI, government and manufacturing. All these verticals are creating digital data, which needs to be managed. The data needs to be protected so that it can be recovered whenever required or shared.

►What trends do you foresee in storage industry?

We see storage management software market increasing significantly. At

the same time we realize that storage hardware costs are decreasing. Increased number of organizations are adopting Information Life Cycle framework with focus on resolving customer interoperability issues. More vendors are adopting SNIA and SMI-S (Storage Management Initiative - Specification). There is an increased adoption of backup to disk and snapshot technologies. Regulations and compliance issues are driving demand for storage and application availability is becoming important.

I do see Indian market growing faster than other countries and will be

prompt in adopting new technologies.

►What should a partner look for in a vendor-sponsored program?

Brand visibility, vendor credibility, lead generation and technology roadmap.

►Will you announce new programs for partners in India?

Legato has established a partner program to recruit partners. Through the partners, it would engage in a series of customized activities catering to local needs.

►You announced protection and recovery solutions that improve an organization's ILM strategy. Explain.

Legato's Information Management is the core of an organization's ILM strategy. ILM is not a product it is a process consisting of 7 steps (Business needs, Collect & Organize, Protect/Recover, Replicate/ Monitor, Access/ Share, Migrate/Archive, Delete/ Destroy) - a strategy to help organization's manage its information to maximize its business value to the organization.



Security MFDs make a mark

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appliance vendor Fortinet—which claims to have 30,000 installations worldwide—says some vendors may have to be blamed for a slow uptake of such devices.

He says traditional software-based security vendors are aligning with hardware vendors to port their software. The pitch these vendors are taking, he says, is, 'we provide the best of breed products on a single appliance, you can buy whatever brand of anti-virus you want to run and load it on us'.

"On the outset it looks an attractive option, but the biggest drawback is support and cost of ownership. These relationships are loosely tied and the customer does not

have any commitment from either party, neither does he have a single-window support," he says. The perception of a higher TCO related to such devices arises from the fact that these parties have to pay each other royalty for an appliance sale, and customers end up paying.

For critics, there's also Symantec's failure to make inroads with its SGS. It could probably have been due to the product itself and not acceptance of the technology. Vendors who followed should have surely taken care of those bugs.

For the network security market in India, so far fragmented with vendors of traditional, software based, point products, the

integrated security appliance could be a definite future. Users who end up paying separate licenses for applications like firewall, VPN, IDS and anti-virus are already seeing value, say VARs. What works in favor of the integrated appliance is that in most IT deployments, the more complex the implementation, the less reliable it is. The security MFD could well drive the network security market in India, estimated by Frost & Sullivan to be \$1.42 billion by 2010.

The SMB market is expected to grow even faster, at 35 percent CAGR. Appliances make up nearly 75 percent of that.

(With inputs from MT Jeewan)