

Fortinet: Chasing the India Dream in UTM

As network security is well on its way to becoming more complex and sophisticated, more security vendors are beginning to look at UTM as the way out. UTM, now the Holy Grail, combines multiple functions into a single device. One such vendor, Fortinet, which got into the UTM space in 2002, is a channel-friendly company, which considers India as the most happening place in the security space.

It was *joie de vivre* for the cyber-villains in 2005. Both large corporations and small companies bore the burnt of cyber break-ins. The year 2006 promises to be no different. On the contrary, security experts are of the view that such threats may get worse.

As the danger of threats becoming more complex and innovative looms large, the need for a sophisticated and simple security system is increasingly being felt across the world in an effort to stay a step ahead.

In recent years, a term, which has gained currency in the ever-evolving security server appliance market, is UTM. UTM, standing for Unified Threat Management, is an appliance, which integrates multiple security features, including Anti-Virus, IDP, Anti-Spam and VPN into a single box.

"Convergence is the key word nowadays, and it is not surprising that security space is also witnessing the trend," says Vishak Raman, Country Manager – India, Fortinet Inc.

As in your mobile phone, you have a camera, you have an outlook express, you have PDA, you have everything on convergence, your security functions are going to get converged at a parameter level.

The very mention of UTM brings to mind the name of Sunnyvale, California-based Fortinet. Founded in 2000, the company makes network appliances for one-stop security shopping. It provides anti-virus, anti-spam, content filtering, intrusion-detection and prevention, firewall, and virtual private network features in one box that plugs into the network.

The stage is set for appliances to play a pivotal role in the security landscape, says analyst firm IDC, which forecasts that by 2007, 80 per cent of all security solutions will be delivered through a dedicated platform. And the security companies that can put several solutions on the same appliance have reasons to rejoice.

India is a big market for UTM

There exist two kinds of markets in the security space. The first has already witnessed some amount of security investment and the augmentation of the security infrastructure is in process. The second signifies the greenfield projects, which are awaiting security installation. The first can be witnessed in the USA, while India is an example of the second type.

"Infrastructure has not done so well in Asia-Pacific. India has a broadband penetration of one million. So, the market UTM addresses is more of a greenfield project. That is why in a short span we have more than six hundred installations in India," says Raman.

The stakes for Fortinet in India are high. The company has been named the #1 UTM vendor with 49-per cent market share in India. "India is the biggest market for UTM. The number of greenfield projects is higher compared to the existing projects. IDC estimates about four to five million as the UTM market in India and overall security market is pegged at about 45 to 50 million," adds Raman.

Fortinet has only been

around in its present form for just five years. The company launched its UTM product in 2002. And, there should be no doubt that the channel-friendly vendor has done very well in the UTM market.

Fortinet uses Ingram Micro as its distributor. The company is looking forward to its relationship with the distribution giant to build up business in India.

As far as the channel model is concerned, Fortinet makes a different proposition. The company does not wish to overload the channel. It believes in having selective channels.

Elaborating on the channel model, Raman says, "We don't believe in quantity but quality. We're looking for security-aware partners with the right skill sets, which is needed to address the market. The products are very technical; so we need guys with people with a good understanding of the network."

Fortinet has roped in only a microscopic minority of 18 channel partners, which includes tier I and tier II partners. "Channel is very limited and focussed. They all are certified people on the board. They are not only going to sell but also support the customers; we take small but firm steps."

The awesome crowded security market is witnessing stiff competition. But Fortinet is not concerned. Raman says, "In an UTM if some wants to be successful, they will have to own the technology. Fortinet has developed most of its own technology. Most have acquired the technology by partnering with other vendors."

"Everybody is coming to the UTM space via the firewall route or VPN route, but nobody has the platform to build UTM architecture. We have no competition; in the UTM market we are the leader that is what IDC says."

Fortinet would not reveal revenue



Vishak Raman
Country Manager – India, Fortinet Inc

figures from India, but says these are growing very fast. The company has four regional offices in Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore and Chennai. In 2006, the number will be expanded to eight. The contribution of India to Fortinet's sales is largest in the South-East Asian market. "There is enough room to grow in the Indian market," says Raman.

Proper training of the channel partners receives high priority in the Fortinet's scheme of things. "We train them properly. As a matter of fact, we let them go who do not fit into our criteria," says Raman.

The Fortinet offers 22 product lines that are designed to offer network protection services across the board ranging from enterprise to SOHO. However, the company's SMB portfolio is very strong.

Fortinet's channel programme is divided into three segments – Distribution, Value-Added Solution Providers and an MSSP Partner Programme – each with their own levels of participation. The Value-Added Solution Provider level is split into four levels – Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze. The MSSP Partner Programme has two levels – Star and Premier. The levels are based on the number of trained engineers at a company, revenue and marketing commitments. ■

