

Press Release

NATIONAL GATEWAY SECURITY SURVEY 2008 SHOWS INTERESTING CHANGES IN THREAT LANDSCAPE

Wick Hill: Woking, Surrey - 20th August 2008

Main findings -

- Strong move towards remote and mobile use.
- Securing the network from external attack is top priority.
- The focus for IT security is on external threat rather than internal threat. This is at variance with the threat risks most organisations face.
- Green issues considered important, but that is not yet translating into purchasing IT security
- Conditions right for UTM growth
- Users' purchasing decisions show IT security is not commoditised.
- Wireless and VoIP increasing

Strong move towards remote and mobile use

The National Gateway Security Survey 2008, carried out for value added distributor and security specialist Wick Hill and sponsored by WatchGuard Technologies, leaders in unified threat management systems, has highlighted the increasing move toward remote and mobile use, as well as the concerns users have about this shift.

In a survey of 341 of the top UK companies, by employee number and turnover, 48% had over 150 remote users and a further 11% had 50 to 100 remote users. 61% said that the number of remote users on their network was increasing. 45% reported that the number of VPNs was increasing and 43% that the number of SSL users was increasing.

Focus is still on external threat, despite the greater danger of inside threat

Despite consistent research which shows that internal threat is a greater IT security risk than external threat, the survey showed that external threat is still perceived as the greater problem. This may be partly due to the regular drip of news on external security problems endured by a range of high profile organisations.

Reinforcing this, the survey showed that the top priority for 2008 was securing the network from external attack, which 79% rated as very important. Securing remote access was rated very important by 75% and authenticating remote users was rated important by 67%.

Green issues

Green issues have been prominent in the IT world over the last year, with many suppliers jumping on the bandwagon to present their products as offering green credentials. However the report shows that, while users are aware of the importance of green issues, they are not prepared to purchase IT security on green issues alone. They will only do so if 'green' solutions also meet other commercial requirements, including price.

When questioned about what their IT world would look like, 62% considered green issues to be important. Environmental impact, however, came well down the list of important issues in purchasing decisions at only 29%.

Conditions right for UTM growth

With the survey highlighting the increasing numbers of remote users and increasing concerns about security, UTM's are well placed to provide the firewalling features which respondents considered most important.

67%, for example, said that centralized management of multiple devices was a very important factor in firewall choice and 60% said that reporting was important. Both centralized management and reporting are greatly facilitated with the right UTM system, where a head office centralized management console can easily manage remote, same-brand UTM's, carrying out tasks such as configuration updates and implementing security policies at remote sites.

With a greater number of remote users, together with a need for easier centralised management and good reporting, it makes sense to use fewer appliances. This again mitigates towards UTM's, which commonly combine up to five functions in one appliance.

Users don't consider IT security to be commoditised

The survey shows that users do not consider IT security to be commoditised. In answers to questions on the importance of various factors in IT purchasing, price came only third at 73%, behind performance at 90% and reseller/supplier knowledge at 74%. The relationship with the supplier was also rated highly at 66%, while interestingly web purchasing availability came bottom of the list at only 15%.

Wireless and VoIP increasing

The survey showed that both wireless use and VoIP use are increasing. 49% of the sample said that the number of VoIP users was increasing and 50% said that the number of wireless users was increasing.

More details

The survey can be viewed on www.wickhill.com/surveysummary

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