

SMITHS NEWS SELECTS BITDEFENDER TO PROTECT ISA SERVER NETWORK

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Tim Weaver, Senior Analyst, Smiths News PLC

Smiths News, the UK’s leading wholesaler of newspapers and magazines has selected BitDefender Antivirus software for use in conjunction with its Internet gateway infrastructure. The implementation forms part of a larger project developing parts of the company’s network and introduce Microsoft’s Internet Security and Acceleration (ISA) Server 2006.

The implementation has enabled Smiths News to rationalise their network elements, halving the number of servers deployed, specifically with the help of ISA server 2006. These servers operate in arrays, using load balancing to ensure high availability and share capacity to meet the demands of the users.

Smiths News PLC was created in 2006 following the demerger from the retail chain WH Smith PLC. Smiths News delivers over 53 million items to 22,000 customers every week.

Operating from headquarters in Swindon, UK, the group employs more than 4,500 staff with 44 warehouses covering England and Wales. Some 1,800 staff are computer users and up to 1,200 of them access the Internet.

“Most of our IT infrastructure is managed from Swindon,” explains Tim Weaver, Senior Analyst. “We run one of the largest SAP implementations in Europe with a highly connected workforce demanding reliable access to business data, reporting and B2B Internet-based applications throughout our network 24/7.”

THE CHALLENGE

In 2006 Smiths News made plans to redesign their gateway proxy solutions and to take advantage of the improved functionality provided by Microsoft’s latest release of its Internet Security and Acceleration (ISA) Servers. Indeed Smiths News was one of the first companies to implement the ISA 2006 release. “The timing was right and it offered greater load balancing features that make it a much more dynamic product than most” Weaver notes.

Smiths News appears to be putting their ISA server deployment to full use. Currently it looks after the web gateway and assists with the internally deployed mail gateways. Weaver recalls “We have used ISA Servers in the past, but these were used in conjunction with third party web proxies and stand alone products to provide antivirus protection.” The upgrade also gave Smiths News the opportunity to simplify the infrastructure. In addition to server consolidation, Smiths News wanted to improve their capabilities in providing secure and timely solutions for the business. Weaver adds “None of our existing [antivirus] solutions would work as add-ons to ISA Server, so we reviewed the market for offerings for ‘Best of Breed’ AV protection.”



THE SOLUTION

The ISA Server provides an ideal security choke point between the internal network and the Internet. However, the default firewall technology and limited functionality does not fully protect against malicious code entering into a company's network.

Many organisations implement a third party antivirus solution - such as BitDefender for ISA Server deployments - to greatly increase the overall network protection by blocking unwanted websites, scanning downloaded files, and email attachments from web-based email services. "We selected a number of competing products for trial; however none of these products met our expectations when tested under load and in our array configuration. BitDefender met all of our functional and test criteria when installed in our environment." Weaver continues "Another important factor was the support provided during the evaluation; where we worked directly with our reseller as well as their senior technical people. The evaluation went very smoothly, with very few configuration issues."



THE RESULT

The main test for Smiths News Internet proxy solution was to compare BitDefender on ISA with the existing 'dedicated' web proxy server which used a very fast 'DLL-based' AV scanner. As a single purpose box, this was designed to deliver high performance, on page loads and file transfers. BitDefender was the only contender to get performance as close to that benchmark solution for the Smiths News ISA server environment. Under tests the solution achieved a detection rate equivalent to that achieved by competitive products. "The winning factor however was just how little processing resource BitDefender requires to do that work," says Weaver "and we are getting web pages delivered in a time that is acceptable to our users."

THE CONCLUSION

The outcome is that Smiths News has delivered a performant ISA Server 2006 Array utilising BitDefender's solution. In summarising the evaluation, Weaver adds "BitDefender was very simple to install and it played nicely into our environment. It didn't upset the configuration manager on ISA or anything like that. There were no hiccoughs on installation or configuration, and it was all very straightforward." Weaver concludes "The outstanding product performance puts this solution into a class of its own when it comes to providing an antivirus solution in an ISA Server 2006 environment. BitDefender was the only vendor able to provide us a truly cost effective solution."

ABOUT BITDEFENDER

BitDefender is the creator of one of the industry's fastest and most effective lines of internationally certified security software. Since inception in 2001, BitDefender has continued to raise the bar and set new standards in proactive threat prevention. Every day, BitDefender protects tens of millions of home and corporate users across the globe - giving them the peace of mind of knowing that their digital experiences will be secure. BitDefender solutions are distributed by a global network of value-added distribution and reseller partners in more than 100 countries worldwide.

More information is available at www.bitdefender.co.uk

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