

## XTM HAS ARRIVED

Ian Kilpatrick, chairman of security VAD Wick Hill, looks at what XTM can offer the channel, as the first products arrive in the UK.

The first XTM (eXtensible threat management) appliances have now arrived in this country and they present some great opportunities for the channel to benefit from this new class of security solution, particularly in larger companies and enterprises.

XTM is a superset of UTM (unified threat management) and it provides functionality more relevant to the continually changing threat environment experienced by enterprises. XTM offers additional security features, more networking capabilities and greater management flexibility. It also provides a high degree of future proofing, with the ability to add on new security functions as the need arises.

The term XTM clarifies the definition of the multi-function security appliance, which had become confused over the years.

With everyone jumping on the UTM bandwagon, the range of security functions in UTM solutions often varied widely with some suppliers offering much more functionality than others. Some vendors provided outdated solutions, which just met the IDC definition, while others significantly exceeded the functionality required to be a UTM appliance.

XTM provides a superior range of security functions to UTM, which was originally defined by IDC in 2003, as consisting of a firewall, intrusion detection/intrusion prevention (IDS/IDP) and gateway anti-virus (AV) in a single, integrated network security appliance.

UTM was mainly purchased by SMEs, but, as performance increased, larger companies used UTMs to secure branch and remote offices, as well as alongside existing gateway firewalls, for the additional functionality.

XTM is particularly relevant for higher end applications because it has much broader functionality than the basic UTM definition, as well as reporting and centralised management over a wider range of functions. This is particularly beneficial for larger organisations, where event correlation is very relevant, but where they are also looking to minimise staff time and training costs.

Charles Kolodgy, research director, security products, for IDC, states that: "UTM will remain the primary security solution for distributed environments, but within the enterprise it will evolve into an eXtensible Threat Management (XTM) platform. XTM platforms will take security appliances beyond traditional boundaries by vastly expanding security features, networking capabilities and management flexibility.

On the growing functionality of the multi-function security appliance, Kolodgy says: "Future XTM appliances should provide automated processes - such as logging, reputation-based protections, event correlation, network access control and vulnerability management. Adding to the networking capabilities will be management of network bandwidth, traffic shaping, throughput, latency and other features, including unified communications."

Kolodgy's definition shows just how far XTM can go to provide a solution which is capable of dealing with today's security threat landscape and changed computing environment.

Clients are now looking for protection from a much greater range of security threats. Remote access has grown hugely and businesses need to deal with the security issues around that. They are also looking for protection for developing applications such as VoIP. Compliance issues have become more important too.

Organisations also face dilemmas such as minimising costs and achieving ROI, while implementing strategic solutions, increasing security and trying to be green. XTM provides a great opportunity to deliver solutions that meet all these requirements

From a channel perspective, there is the chance to sell XTM into enterprise and public sector accounts. Enterprises are looking to achieve or maintain PCI compliance and reduce their green footprint as well as cutting purchase costs, running costs and staff training costs.

They also want to give themselves some protection against what appears to be a never ending, ever changing range of threats - and all of this within serious budget constraints. XTM isn't a panacea for all their needs, but it certainly ticks a lot of the boxes.

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