

Smiths News selects BitDefender to protect ISA Server Network

“When it comes to providing an antivirus solution in a multiple Microsoft ISA Server 2006 Server environment, employing load balancing, BitDefender was the only vendor able to provide a truly cost effective solution.” Tim Weaver, Senior Analyst, Smiths News’ Technology Solutions Team.



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.

The company

Smiths News PLC was created in 2006 following the de-merger 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, the group employs more than 4,500 staff with 44 warehouses covering England and Wales.



“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. Some 1800 of our staff are computer users and up to 1200 of them access the internet.”

The challenge

In 2006 we made plans to redesign our 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 using arrays, better configuration management and additional user interface features that makes it a much more dynamic product than most.”

We are putting it to full use. Currently it looks after our web gateway and assists with our mail gateways.



“Smiths News has used ISA Servers, but these were previously used in conjunction with third party web proxies and stand alone products to provide antivirus protection. The upgrade gave us the opportunity to simplify the infrastructure. In addition to server consolidation, we wanted to improve our capabilities in providing secure and timely solutions for the business.

“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

“We selected a number of a 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.”

“BitDefender came to the front on its features and the reporting facilities are excellent. Another important factor was the support provided during the evaluation; where we worked directly with our reseller and had access to the [BitDefender] product manager as well as their senior technical people. The evaluation went very smoothly, with very few configuration issues.”

Result

The outcome is that Smiths News has delivered a performant ISA Server 2006 Array using BitDefender. 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 Tim Weaver, adding. “And we are getting web pages delivered in a time that is acceptable to our users.”

The main test for the 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.

Conclusion

In summarising the evaluation, Tim 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, it was all very straightforward.”

“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.”

Tim Weaver, Senior Analyst, Smiths News Technology Solutions Team.

About BitDefender®

BitDefender is a leading global provider of security solutions that satisfy the protection requirements of today’s computing environment. The company offers one of the industry’s fastest and most effective lines of security software, setting new standards for threat prevention, timely detection and mitigation.

BitDefender delivers products and services to over 41 million home and corporate users in more than 180 countries. BitDefender has offices in the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Spain and Romania. Further information about BitDefender can be obtained by visiting: <http://www.bitdefender.co.uk>

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