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VITAL INFORMATION FOR VARs AND TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATORS

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Review:

Secure Wired/Wireless Access In A Snap

By Frank J. Ohlhorst

lots of good security appliances are already on the market. Yet Secure Computing has found a way to make its SnapGear SG565 all-in-one wireless Internet appliance stand out from the crowd.

The SnapGear SG565 focuses on securing both wired and wireless access for small and midsize businesses. The product combines an 802.11b/g access point with a highly integrated security engine, offering administrators a stateful packet inspection (SPI) firewall and a VPN plus load balancing, fail-over, Intrusion detection, threat mitigation, content filtering and secure remote management capabilities in one device.

Setup and management can be done via a secure browser using wizard-based tools. For those who like to delve into the nuts and bolts of the unit, a textual command-line interface can be used.

One pillar of any security appliance is an integrated firewall. Here, the SG565 relies on an ICSA-certified SPI engine, which is built off a hard-end version of Linux. The firewall uses dynamic technology to repel denial-of-service attacks, port scans and unauthorized probes into the network.

A chunk of what the firewall accomplishes is to prevent intrusions. The SG565 uses an active intrusion-detection system (IDS) powered by Snort to proactively monitor network events and alert network personnel if there's suspicious activity. The IDS assists with intrusion mitigation by profiling traffic bidirectionally to help identify compromised systems.

The SG565, too, serves up virus protection. Administrators will find embedded antivirus gateway services for SMTP, HTTP, POP3 and FTP, which should corral the brunt of viruses infecting businesses today. That said, VARs should always layer antivirus technology by deploying a desktop- or server-based antivirus engine to provide a safeguard for anything that may slip past the SG565.



Secure Computing also offers an optional content-filtering service. Although the service isn't tightly integrated with the SG565, it's a worthwhile option. The filtering is provided by WebWasher, a separate Secure Computing service that offers yearly contracts.

The CRN Test Center would like to see the service better integrated with the SG565, with options and reporting handled directly from the appliance's management console.

The Webwasher URL filtering option monitors and limits employee websurfing which limits corporate liability, provides bandwidth control, enhances employee productivity and increases security by preventing access to sites with malware and spyware. Combining the service with the appliance is an avenue for VARs to create ongoing revenue and cement their relationships with SMB customers.

With the addition of WebWasher to the mix, one might wonder if a security appliance is still needed at all. The simple answer: yes.

For the SG565, it comes down to the firewall capabilities, secure wireless and VPN options. On the wireless side, the SG565 offers the ability to integrate IPSec and PPTP VPN capa-

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bilities over the wireless network. That eliminates the weaknesses associated with WEP-based wireless security and the complexity found in WPA wireless encryption.

The support for PPTP VPN connections is worth noting. In most cases, users can rely on Microsoft's integrated VPN client instead of having to download and install a separate VPN client, as for PPTP. That helps keep deployments simple and offers adequate protection for most sites.

The VPN capabilities also extend to wired connections, such as remote users or site-to-site tunnels. The site-to-site options make the SG565 suitable for branch-office connections, keeping all traffic secure between remote offices.

The unit can support 150 concurrent VPN tunnels and uses hardware-based encryption and acceleration to prevent bottlenecks. The SG565 is rated for 120Mbps of throughput, which should be more than adequate for any small business and most midsize companies.

Other bonuses include fail-over support. Here, the SG565 offers multiple Internet connections, allowing both the aggregation and fail-over capabilities offered by multiple routes to the Internet.

For example, a small office could deploy both a cable modem-based internet connection and a backup DSL connection to keep everything going if one of those connections fails. Additional performance improvements are offered by the



SECURE COMPUTING SNAP GEAR SG565

www.securecomputing.com or
<http://www.snapgear.com>

- > **Tech Rating:** ★★★★★
- > **Channel Rating:** ★★★★★
- > **Distributors:** Tech Data, Westcon, Alternative Technology

Note: Recommended status is earned with a score of at least eight stars out of 10.

SG565's integrated Web caching engine, where popular Web pages are stored locally to speed desktop access to the most-used Web sites.

The SnapGear SG565 carries a suggested retail price of \$599 with a one-year warranty or \$839 with a three-year warranty.

For partners deploying SnapGear devices to multiple sites and customers, San Jose, Calif.-based Secure Computing offers the Global Command Center, a browser-based management console that lets solution providers manage several units -- a potential springboard for shifting on-site management of the units to a managed service.

Secure Computing supports VARs with its PartnerFirst channel program, which is aimed at thoroughly training partners in the company's technology and supporting them via dedicated resources, such as the gated PartnerFirst Web site. Margins on the products vary greatly, but the range proves to be quite competitive for solution providers.

PartnerFirst has three partner levels: Silver, Gold and Platinum, each with increasing levels of support and profit opportunity.

Silver offers the lowest entry points, with a minimum requirement of filling out a channel partner form. Gold and Platinum have quarterly sales quotas but offer higher margins, extra marketing support and lead generation tools. Platinum partners have access to marketing development funds, dedicated technicians and partner events.

SnapGearTM

<http://www.snapgear.com>