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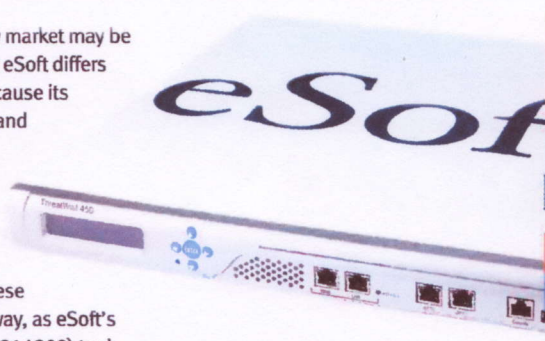
eSoft ThreatWall 450

A cost-effective email content-management appliance, with some excellent features

The web-content security market may be chock-full of choices, but eSoft differs from the mainstream because its antivirus, antispam, IPS and web-filtering measures are all home grown, so it doesn't rely on any third-party vendor for these functions. Don't think these are substandard in any way, as eSoft's InstaGate 404e (web ID: 214800) took a well-deserved place on the *PC Pro* A List for its superb mix of value and features, and now we take a closer look at its ThreatWall 450 appliance.

The ThreatWall sits behind a firewall, and provides web and messaging content security. It's customised with eSoft's ThreatPaks, where the Web package provides web-content filtering, protection from spyware and phishing sites, gateway antivirus, IPS, antispam and IM and P2P app controls. The Email ThreatPak adds message-content filtering, virus scanning, antispam and mail quarantining. In fact, this appliance is even offered as an Exchange replacement, as it can be upgraded to full standalone mail server status.

The 450 supports transparent, standalone mode and routed deployments, and we opted for the first option where all four Gigabit ports are



The ThreatWall was blocking sites within 15 minutes of opening the box.

bridged. eSoft gets our thumbs-up for installation, as we were up and running in less than 15 minutes. On first contact with the well-designed management interface, the appliance contacts eSoft and downloads the various ThreatPaks plus all database and signature updates.

Web filtering is applied immediately, with a predefined default category policy. You have a total of 17 main URL categories and under these are more than 50 subcategories. These are all selected in the default policy, but it's easy to create custom policies and apply time schedules. User authentication comes into the mix, as the device maintains a local user database and integrates with LDAP and AD servers.

For inbound and outbound mail scanning, you can provide details of your

internal mail servers or use the device's transparent mode. One feature not available is eSoft's mail-server mirroring, which is offered only on the InstaGate products. The antispam measures include a learning phase for Bayesian

filtering, and messages can be checked for banned content where you can create scripts that look for details such as UK credit card numbers.

The ThreatMonitor screen keeps you in the loop with all activity, as its row of tabbed folders offers plenty of graphical information about

performance. The web section shows pie charts and tables of blocked and allowed sites plus general web browsing traffic, while for mail you can easily see spam volumes and what's being quarantined.

The 450 delivers top performance as a web filter and spam catcher. For the former, we used the default policy and our attempts to access more than 100 games, gambling and social-networking sites were all rebuffed. We also left the appliance transparently scanning email from two live accounts for a week, and not one spammer got through – neither were there any false-positives.

The ThreatWall impressed us not only with its ease of deployment and features, but also with its capabilities. Performance was excellent and, as with its InstaGate products, eSoft is offering an extremely cost-effective security solution. **DAVE MITCHELL**



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