

UTMs have broken the traditional mold and now contain just about anything that you can conceive of putting on the perimeter, says **Peter Stephenson**.

This is the hot review of the year. The herd of UTMs queued up on our loading dock ready for testing was prodigious. For this test, SC Lab Manager Mike Stephenson beefed up the test bed to unload all our guns against the victims. The results were most interesting.

First, UTMs have broken the traditional mold and now contain just about anything that you can conceive of putting on the perimeter. We saw anti-spam, anti-malware, firewalls and the rest of the usual gateway tools all neatly packaged into 10 appliances – no software or virtual appliances.

The breadth and depth of covered protocols improves every year. We saw emphasis on P2P and IM added to those products that did not have them last year.

The price-performance ratio continues to improve along with the products' robustness. In short, we liked pretty much all that we saw.

Proventia Network MFS



Vendor IBM
Price \$749
Contact www.ibm.com/services/security

The IBM Proventia Network Multi-Function Security (MFS) appliance may look small on the outside, but this product is full of big functionality. It combines firewall, VPN, SSL VPN, intrusion prevention, anti-virus, anti-spam, web/URL filtering and application protection.

This tool was easy from setup all the way through advanced management. The initial configuration takes just a few minutes and is guided by an easy to follow setup wizard, which helps get the network settings and an initial policy in place. After the setup wizard completes its job, all other management is done through the intuitive web interface. This GUI has a nice layout with an easy-to-navigate, tree-based structure, intuitive

menus and configuration windows. Most policy is configured by using drop-down menus and checkboxes, which is simple to manage, but it also allows for flexibility. Policies can become as broad or as granular as needed. We found this product to perform quite well under our test. Even with the firewall as open as we could configure it, the default IPS policy stopped all of our attacks and scans. The only place this tool fell short is when we were able to cause it to stall out under heavy scans, but it did not let us break through even when it stalled.

Documentation includes a short quick-start card, which illustrates the appliance ports with descriptions and shows how to connect to the setup wizard. Other documentation is in PDF format and includes an administrator guide and many deployment guides for various deployment options, and a policy configuration guide. These guides are well-organized and easy to read.

IBM offers basic support at 22 percent of list price with select and premium support offerings available. These options offer various levels of phone and web-based support, as well as updates and upgrades. There is also a knowledge base, product documentation and various downloads available on the website.


At a price of about \$750, this product is an excellent value for the money. The appliance offers a lot of features in an easy-to-use, inexpensive device.

SC MAGAZINE RATING	
Features	★★★★★
Ease of use	★★★★★
Performance	★★★★★
Documentation	★★★★☆
Support	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★
OVERALL RATING	★★★★★
Strengths Solid IPS, even with the default policy and the firewall open.	
Weaknesses Could use some screen shots in the documentation. We have pointed this out before.	
Verdict A pleasant surprise this year. Solid performance and a very good price make this our Recommended choice this month.	



Solid IPS, even with the default policy and the firewall open.

Peter Stephenson



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