

Not having a properly installed firewall is equivalent to leaving all the windows and doors to your office wide open. Anyone can just walk in. **By Craig Hinton**

At the heart of all security policies lies the firewall. As networks grow more complex, more and more reliance is being placed on firewalls to supply the intelligence needed to manage sophisticated

online services and to protect corporate data.

But it is a little more complicated than just bolting the door. The need for companies to access the internet means that there must be

two-way traffic through this door. And how that traffic is managed – and whether the method of managing it is suitable for your particular business – will determine the best firewall for your network.

Ingate 1400 Firewall

Version	3.1
Supplier	InGate Systems
Price	from £2,068
Contact	www.ingate.com



Swedish company Ingate may be a relatively new name in the firewall market, but its products have been getting an extremely positive reaction. The Ingate 1400 appliance is its solution for the medium-sized business; it is a black, 1U rack-mounted appliance, with four Ethernet ports, a COM port and a simple LED display.

Initial installation is a little fiddly, since it is done via a command line interface. But once this is complete, full configuration is carried out using a nice, uncluttered web-based GUI that presented no problems.

The Ingate 1400 provides a number of security features, including packet filtering and NAT; it also offers traffic management. Not only can you specify quality of service, but you can also prioritise traffic from or to particular users.

The firewall rules can also be made time-dependent so that you can fine-tune the amount of traffic across the network. Software upgrades are automatic: the appliance checks for new versions every 24

hours or whenever rebooted. Sadly, logging is nothing out of the ordinary, and may not provide as much information as you feel is necessary.

None of this is particularly revolutionary, but the Ingate 1400 does have one very big trick up its sleeve – session initiation protocol. SIP is an interoperability solution being adopted by companies such as Microsoft and Cisco. It directly addresses the problems of traffic, such as VoIP and instant messaging, that most firewalls simply cannot recognise, let alone protect against. The Ingate 1400 is not only SIP-compliant, but also offers an optional SIParator product which integrates with the firewall and allows secure transmission of SIP-based traffic without passing through the firewall, thus reducing the load.

The appliance comes complete with an IPsec-compliant VPN, which integrates with the company's other products to provide secure communication between the main network and both branch

offices and remote users.

Documentation is straightforward. There is a very handy 'getting started' guide which takes you through the installation process in a pain-free, step by step manner. There is also a comprehensive user manual.

While not the most exciting firewall in this Group Test, the Ingate 1400 provides all you would expect from an appliance. What makes it stand out is the integration with SIP. If SIP takes off – and there's a good chance it will, given the increase in multimedia traffic – Ingate will be streets ahead of the game.

SC MAGAZINE RATING

Features	★★★★☆
Ease of use	★★★★☆
Performance	★★★★★
Documentation	★★★★★
Support	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★
OVERALL RATING	★★★★★

FOR One of the very few firewalls to protect against SIP traffic.

AGAINST Installation is a bit clumsy and logging could be improved.

VERDICT Although as a standard firewall this is nothing revolutionary, its handling of SIP traffic is something to watch out for.



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