

The UTM group is maturing rapidly and taking market share from multipurpose products, but there is good news and bad news, says **Peter Stephenson**.

The unified threat management (UTM) group is maturing rapidly and, in fact, is taking over market share from the multipurpose products. The result is a true UTM that has a lot of anti-malware capability. There is good news and bad news here.

The bad news is that this creates a single point of failure. It also creates a bit of a dilemma for security architects. If one buys a first rate UTM, especially one with a lot of anti-malware capability, how does one justify purchasing an additional anti-malware gateway?

The good news is that the UTM's we tested all are very competent. In fact, in some cases, we were hard-pressed to find significant differentiation between some of the products, and the dashboards even look similar. There is no doubt that this product category is taking off.



Astaro Security Gateway



Supplier Astaro
Price starts at \$2,550
Contact www.astaro.com

The Astaro Security Gateway splits its protection into three categories. These categories are network protection, web filtering and email security. Network protection includes a firewall, IPS and VPN capabilities. The web filtering piece features a web content filter, web anti-virus and anti-spyware, as well as IM and P2P control. The final part is email security and this includes email protection from spam, phishing and viruses, as well as email encryption.

All these features come together in a fairly easy to use web console. At first glance, the webGUI appears to be quite difficult to navigate, but it becomes simple to find your way around once you've tinkered a bit with it. The actual deployment of this appliance is guided by a simple wizard that

also assists in setting up an initial filtering policy.

This appliance contains a lot of functionality. We found policy management to be simple and straightforward with most policies configured by simply checking a box. Much of its functionality, according to the vendor, comes from best of breed open source software. The company claims to have invented the UTM category in 2000. Regardless of whether or not that is accurate, the result of seven years of experience in the field is reflected in the product's performance.

In a world of big PDF manuals for documentation, this product goes against the grain with three very simple paper manuals. These manuals include a getting started guide, operating instructions and an administration guide. All these manuals are clear and easy to read. The administration guide is especially in-depth with excellent detail, step-by-step procedures, screenshots and diagrams.

Customers have access to the Astaro support web portal. This portal includes a knowledge base,

manuals, training videos and a URL filtering database check. Other support programs are offered at additional cost, including platinum support featuring 24/7 phone and email ticketing.

The product is priced starting at \$2,550. At these prices, this product offers a lot of value for the money. The Astaro Security Gateway comes in different sizes for different size environments. This appliance would be a good buy for almost any size environment.

SC MAGAZINE RATING	
Features	★★★★★
Ease of use	★★★★☆
Performance	★★★★★
Documentation	★★★★★
Support	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★
OVERALL RATING	★★★★★
Strengths	Very affordable, fully loaded UTM appliance.
Weaknesses	Working with the webGUI is slightly awkward at first.
Verdict	A solid product with a lot of experience behind it and good value for most sized organizations.

Very affordable, fully loaded UTM appliance.

Peter Stephenson

	The Americas Astaro Corporation 3 New England Executive Park Burlington, MA 01803 USA T: +1 781 345 5000 F: +1 781 345 5100 americas@astaro.com	Europe, Middle East, Africa Astaro AG Amalienbadstrasse 36 76227 Karlsruhe, Germany T: +49 721 255 16 0 F: +49 721 255 16 200 emea@astaro.com	Asia Pacific Region Astaro K.K. 12/F Ark Mori Building 1-12-32 Akasaka Minato-ku Tokyo 107-6012, Japan T: +81 3 4360 8350 apac@astaro.com
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