

# The cost of downtime

**To tackle the growing menace of malware, Times Now opted for a single Unified Threat Management (UTM) solution** BY ASHWANI MISHRA

➤ *On December 12, 2005, Russia's first 24x7 English-language news channel, Russia TV, shut down for several hours. The reason? A crippling virus attack on the channel's computer system. Broadcasting resumed after the virus was removed from the system.*

Boasting over 30 players in English and Indian languages, the news channel business in India has been growing by 8-10 percent annually. In fact, one-third of all television channels in India are about news and current affairs. Together, they attract 10-12 percent of total advertising spend on television. In 2006, they generated Rs 620 crore in advertising revenue.

Since news channels earn primarily from advertising revenue that is generated on the basis of ratings and perception, there is intense competition among the players to keep the viewer hooked. This is possible only by reporting news as it happens round the clock irrespective of location and time. Any disruption in that viewer experience means can loss of mindshare, loss of revenue and brand erosion.

For Delhi-based Times Now, a relatively recent entrant into the news channel business, the possibility of disruption cannot even be considered, pitched as it is against more established players

like NDTV 24x7, CNN-IBN, CNBC TV18, and TV Today. The channel, which is a joint venture between Bennett, Coleman and Reuters, was concerned about the spam and blended threats consisting of spyware and trojans on its IT network. The channel's nation-wide IT foot-print put it at risk from external spam and virus attacks.

"A single virus attack and the resultant downtime could severely affect the channel's functioning and result in loss of audience," explains Sunil Mattoo, manager, broadcast IT, Times Now.

The news channel has four different groups of users consisting of top executives, programmers, editors and

marketing, each with varying browsing patterns. "Our employees carry out an extensive and varied browsing on a daily basis, and the channel demanded continuous and automated identity and schedule-based security and access controls," says Mattoo.

In addition, in-depth research reports form an important part of the channel's confidential information repository, and there was need to secure them against internal threats that could lead to breach of confidential details. Further, the channel also uses a Gigabit video network with video servers that can store 100 hours of storage sessions relayed from the national capital region. These servers cater to the editing that is done on the computer. The video links use VSAT connectivity, while the corporate network connecting Mumbai and Delhi is linked via leased lines. VSAT is



**SUNIL MATTOO**, MANAGER, BROADCAST IT, TIMES NOW

also used as a back up if the leased line between the two cities fails.

Mattoo wanted a single solution that would secure all these by equipping the network with features like firewall, Web filter, antivirus, antispam and bandwidth management. "We didn't want to go for multiple solutions

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because of the high cost involved in buying multiple devices. Also, we didn't want to overload ourselves for maintaining multiple technical resources," he says. Being a 24x7 operation, updating or changing technologies frequently wasn't an option.

After evaluating various security products, the channel decided to choose a unified threat management (UTM) solution. "It also allayed our apprehensions relating to complex graphic user interfaces and installations of Internet security solutions," says Mattoo. The UTM

blended with their existing active directory services and the automated single sign-on feature. This saved them the time and effort of creating each user individually on the UTM.

The identity-based intelligent reporting feature of the product helped Mattoo to have complete visibility into end-user behavior, allowing him to spot anomalies and internal threats efficiently and quickly. With this feedback, security policies could be remodeled to align with the organization's needs.

The UTM bandwidth management solution has helped to assign download rights and priorities to users as per their needs. Policy-based bandwidth management has facilitated identity-based and time schedule-based bandwidth availability, with the ability to specify the amount and speed of downloads that a group of users or individuals are allowed. This ensured that critical applications have sufficient bandwidth at their disposal. Mattoo is pleased with the results of the UTM solution which was provided by Ahmedabad-based Cyberoam. "The cost of deployment was around Rs 1.5 lakh. We have been able to reduce bandwidth consumption by at least 60 percent using this solution," he informs. ■

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## TIMES NOW NETWORK ARCHITECTURE

