

Secure Your Data

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We wish this category weren't necessary, but you need software and tools to ensure that your systems stay secure and your data stays safe. Unfortunately, the potential for both accidents (think hard-drive failures) and malicious attacks (worms, spyware, hackers, and more) is great, and you must be proactive.

Your business should have a multi-pronged data-protection strategy that includes defense—firewall, antivirus, and antispymware—plus reliable backups to guard against the possibility of disaster. Just as important as having the strategy is sticking to it. Make sure that backups are performed religiously and that software patches are applied regularly.

There are a variety of places where you can put software to work defending your infrastructure. First, and most obvious, is on individual client machines. But installing and maintaining software on multiple machines can become tedious quickly, and users may not manage their desktops correctly despite all the software you load on them. All but the smallest businesses will benefit from perimeter security solutions that sit at or near the edge of your company's network, where it meets the Internet. (For more on this topic, visit our Business Security Buying Guide at go.pcmag.com/securitybg.)

Please note that in this section, several products are marked, "this version not rated." In these cases, we reviewed a different tier of the same product (such as a professional edition instead of a small-business edition) or the previous version of the software. To see how these similar titles fared, visit our Web site at www.pcmag.com.

Perimeter security products offer the advantage of central installation and management, and they are available in a variety of versions to suit your needs: packages that you can run on a local server, software embedded in plug-and-play appliances, or from your ISP.

For example, Symantec BrightMail AntiSpam 6.0 (starting at \$26 per month for 100 users) performs highly effective spam filtering and is available with an antivirus plug-in. You can run BrightMail on a Windows server, get it built into a hardware appliance, such as Borderware Technologies' MXtreme MX-200, or outsource this capability by choosing an ISP (such as AT&T or Earthlink) that implements BrightMail for the e-mail accounts it hosts. (Symantec Corp., www.symantec.com . This version not rated.)

Similarly, MailFrontier Gateway Server offers a Small Business Edition (starting

at \$495 per year) as well as dedicated appliances and client versions. (MailFrontier Inc., www.mailfrontier.com . This version not rated.)

You'll have to weigh the cost, convenience, and trade-offs of each option. Appliances can be particularly appealing, because dedicated systems help hide complexity and some include antispam, firewall, remote access, and even Web filtering.

Another approach is to adopt versions of traditional security software that include central management for corporate use. For example, Zone Labs' Integrity 5.0 (starting at \$65 per seat) lets you set firewall policies centrally. (Zone Labs LLC, www.zonelabs.com . ●●●●○) On the crucial antivirus front, Symantec AntiVirus Corporate Edition (starting at \$251 for five users) provides an extension of the company's antivirus product. (Symantec Corp., www.symantec.com . ●●●●○) McAfee Active VirusScan SMB Edition (starting at \$215 for five users) also offers a similar extension. (Network Associates Technology Inc., www.mcafee.com. This version not rated.)

Keeping your OS up-to-date against security vulnerabilities is crucial. If you're running Windows XP, start by installing Windows XP Service Pack 2 (free)—if you haven't already. More generally, make sure your PCs check automatically for new Windows updates, or visit www.windowsupdate.com regularly. (Microsoft Corp., www.microsoft.com . Not rated.)

Windows XP SP2 includes the new Windows Firewall, a dramatic improvement over the older Internet Connection Firewall. Still, we recommend running a full- featured third-party firewall like Zone Labs' ZoneAlarm Pro 5 (\$39.95 direct) on each desktop. Once you've installed a supplemental firewall, don't forget to disable SP2's built-in firewall to avoid conflicts. (Zone Labs LLC, www.zonelabs.com . ●●●●●)



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ZoneAlarm is also now available as part of ZoneAlarm Security Suite (\$69.95 direct, plus \$24.95 a year after the first year. ●●●●○), which includes antivirus, e-mail monitoring, Web content filtering, and IM security features. Norton Internet Security 2005 (\$69.95 direct, Symantec Corp., www.symantec.com. ●●●●○) and McAfee Internet Security 2005 (\$69.99 direct, Network Associates Technology Inc., www.mcafee.com. ●●●●○) offer a similar breadth of capabilities. The Norton and ZoneAlarm products are our current Editors' Choices.

Spyware and adware are an increasing concern, and even though most forms are more annoying than threatening, it pays to be protected. We haven't found any antispysware product that provides an impenetrable shield, but we have some favorites: Webroot's Spy Sweeper 3.0 (\$29.95 direct, Webroot Software Inc., www.webroot.com . ●●●●○) and Lavasoft's Ad-Aware SE Plus 1.02 (\$26.95 direct, Lavasoft, www.lavasoftusa.com . ●●●●○). Both are effective at alerting you to malware infestations in real time and letting you block them. The McAfee and Norton/Symantec security suites also claim to provide antispysware support, but they aren't as effective.



Spy Sweeper 3.0

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Finally, if you're looking for ways to cut out spam and phishing attacks (and who isn't?), consider antispam tools that are for both individual desktops and gateways. On the client side, we prefer MailFrontier Desktop 4.0 (\$29.95 direct) for Outlook and Outlook Express. (MailFrontier Inc., www.mailfrontier.com. ●●●●○)

For backups, the best software likely depends on how you approach the task: Do you use a traditional tape-drive backup system, back up to recordable CDs or DVDs, copy one entire hard drive to another, or use an Internet-based backup service? Retrospect Professional 6.5 (\$89 direct) is a comprehensive traditional backup tool. (Dantz Development Corp., www.dantz.com . ●●●●○) BounceBack Professional 5.4 (\$99 direct) is useful for cloning one hard drive to another. (CMS Products Inc., www.cmsproducts.com . ●●●●○)



iBackup

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Among Internet-based backup services, our favorite is IBackup (starting at \$14.95 a month), which works either directly via your browser or through a Windows client and lets you configure an online drive to appear as a local drive. (Pro-Softnet Corp., www.ibackup.com . ●●●●○)

These applications will help any small business streamline operations and even open new opportunities for success.



Retrospect Professional 6.5

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