

Simple Server Consolidation Simplifies Collaboration Services



International IT consultancy virtualizes security and availability into IBM iSeries Linux infrastructure

With headquarters in Aurora, Ontario, Canada, ASTECH is an independent IT organization that provides consulting and training services around the world. In many ways, ASTECH acts as a virtual company, managing a highly skilled and knowledgeable internal and contractor staff that provides training services in 36 countries to over 5,000 people annually. As a result, the company relies heavily on the Internet to coordinate e-mail communication, calendaring and other Web-based systems to plan logistics.

With more and more of ASTECH's customers interested in online distance learning as a way to contain costs, better reach remote employees and augment classroom training, the company also became interested in creating the right IT infrastructure to support its needs.

ASTECH embarked on a strategic initiative to improve its collaborative capability. As a result, the company sought to upgrade its infrastructure from a hosted environment using random Microsoft products



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Mark Buchner, President of ASTECH

to an internally managed one, based on consolidated IBM iSeries servers running Linux. This effort included upgrading its Cisco PIX firewall to StoneGate, an enterprise-grade firewall and VPN from Stonesoft Corporation to increase control, reliability, security and manageability.

Assessing Security Needs

ASTECH's professional services business requires a high degree of collaboration among geographically dispersed personnel to coordinate daily operations, planning and logistics. In an increasingly cost-competitive education market, ASTECH also desired to improve productivity and reduce costs.

With the Internet as a common thread among ASTECH's staff and contractors, any disruption to the Internet could significantly impact ASTECH's productivity; therefore, the company was looking to maximize Internet and network reliability and availability, as well as security. Additionally, the company desired to upgrade its distance learning capabilities to meet customer demand. So instead of traveling classrooms with servers and PCs, ASTECH used the Internet to deliver hands-

on training. Naturally, communications needed to be extremely secure.

ASTECH opted to consolidate all of its software products to a centralized Linux infrastructure based on the IBM i5 server platform. However, ASTECH found that its existing Cisco PIX firewall appliance was not powerful enough to upgrade or scale up. Administrators found that more often than not, they needed to bring someone in to tune it. With many of ASTECH's students needing access to the network, an inflexible, unscalable solution had created a difficult situation.

Mark Buchner, president of ASTECH, expressed concern that with server consolidation providing a single point of failure, the company required the right security solution for the infrastructure.

As a small business, however, the company needed to be highly cost conscious. So instead of separate, appliance-based infrastructure cobbled together with bits and pieces, ASTECH sought to put a single, virtualized security system in place using Linux LPARs on an i5.

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"Now, Stonesoft not only acts as a firewall and VPN, but also manages load balancing, so that all Internet requests are spread evenly between the two connections, effectively giving us double our bandwidth."

Mark Buchner, President of ASTECH

Assessing Solutions

In its search for a security solution, ASTECH looked at well-known firewall vendors as well as other Linux-based freeware security products. But after evaluating StoneGate, ASTECH found there was no comparison. Initially drawn to StoneGate for its support for open-source and the iSeries and i5 in particular, ASTECH technicians saw that StoneGate provided much more than compatibility and support after testing the product.

Buchner found StoneGate to be an "extremely elegant solution that allowed ASTECH to meet its needs for increased control, reliability, security and manageability, without requiring Linux gearheads." ASTECH's administrators were tremendously impressed with StoneGate's ease of use and ability to act as one logical partition on the i5 server.

Results

StoneGate was chosen as the security partner for this project as the most critical problems facing ASTECH were the reliability and

security vulnerabilities when their complete operation was consolidated onto a single system. StoneGate provides a single, centralized network security management solution, which can also be used remotely and integrates to other critical security infrastructure components.

The core security infrastructure providing VPN and firewall capabilities were built using StoneGate. At the same time StoneGate, implemented on i5 Linux partition, addressed also reliability, availability, and security issues. For a small company with limited resources, StoneGate provided the best results at a lower cost that allowed ASTECH to focus on its business vs. its technology.

Since implementing StoneGate into its Linux infrastructure, ASTECH has been pleased with the way the i5 Linux partition utilizes StoneGate security. The i5/OS has the ability to set thresholds within the security infrastructure and establish rules or policies for what to do with system resources in the event the thresholds are exceeded.

ASTECH Solutions Inc. in Brief

ASTECH is an independent IT consultancy organisation made up of highly skilled and knowledgeable professionals from around the world. Headquartered in Aurora, Ontario, Canada. ASTECH provides a full range of consulting, project, and education services to help businesses meet their objectives.

STONESOFT EXPERIENCE

Stonesoft Corporation (HEX: SFT1V) is an innovative provider of integrated network security and business continuity. Its StoneGate™ Security Platform unifies firewall, VPN and IPS, blending network security and end-to-end availability into a unified and centrally managed system for distributed enterprises where security, uptime, and ease of use are essential. StoneGate incorporates the award-winning load-balancing technology of StoneBeat®.

Enterprises that require advanced network security and always-on business connectivity can choose StoneGate for low TCO, best price-to-performance ratio, and highest ROI of any high-end firewall, VPN and IPS solution.

Founded in 1990, Stonesoft Corporation has corporate headquarters in Helsinki, Finland; Americas regional headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia; and Asia Pacific regional headquarters in Singapore. For more information, go to www.stonesoft.com.



THE STONEGATE PLATFORM

As the first highly available, load balancing network security solution of its kind, StoneGate sets a new standard for FW, VPN and Intrusion solutions. StoneGate provides a unified security platform with active-active clustering, load balancing and bandwidth aggregation for multiple Internet links and ability to transparently fail-over VPNs, all with the security and connectivity of an integrated FW/VPN.

- **Multi-Link Technology™** – Seamless fail-over between multiple ISPs and FW clusters for always-on connections
- **Increased Performance** – Analyzes and utilizes fastest possible connection through integrated intelligent load balancing between ISPs and FWs.
- **Multi-Layer Inspection™** – Combines the best aspects of application proxy firewalls with traditional packet filtering and stateful inspection technologies
- **Reduce Costs** – Eliminate network complexities and costs associated with multiple vendor solutions and travel time
- **Unified, Central Management** – Robust remote management, along with simple remote update, alert center management, reporting, diagram editor and hierarchy policy updates. Also integrates FW and VPN with StoneGate's IDS Plus solution into a unified platform.

StoneGate is available either as a software-based solution that capitalizes on existing hardware investments, or as Stonesoft's own integrated appliance eliminating complexity and costs associated with multiple-vendor solutions. All of Stonesoft's appliances include the standard enterprise level features with the only difference being the number of physical interfaces and performance level.



Stonesoft Corporation (HEX: SFT1V)
is an innovative provider of integrated
network security and business continuity.

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