

# How one vendor has adopted green issues

*Unified threat management (UTM) appliances vendor WatchGuard Technologies provides an example of how one company has taken green issues on board.*

WatchGuard UTMs include firewall, VPN, gateway anti-virus, anti-spyware, IDS/IPS, proactive threat management, spam blocking and URL filtering, as well as management and reporting, in a single appliance.

WatchGuard has made a major commitment to implement green issues throughout the company and in its product design and manufacture. Green factors have come to be viewed by WatchGuard not only as environmentally beneficial, but also as a strategic business requirement. The company adheres to the Design for Environment (DfE) initiative, an American environmental standard, which is equally applicable globally.


WatchGuard carries out its green policies by creating designs that reduce materials usage and waste (including packaging), increase recyclability, lengthen life cycles, and minimise energy consumption in all aspects of distribution and operation. WatchGuard products are also designed to comply with specific environmental directives and legislation.

The company says that by using one WatchGuard UTM appliance, instead of potentially five or more separate appliances or servers, means users save space in the office and significantly reduce power consumption.

This reduction in the power needed is felt both in the rack and in the air conditioning necessary to cool multiple products. Indeed, in smaller organisations, it can completely remove the necessity for 24x7, year-round air conditioning. A single appliance also means one reporting and management interface, which is typically much more

practical than multiple interfaces. This minimises training and centralises all security alerts, potentially removing additional server and monitor requirements.

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can upgrade functionality without having to change their hardware platform.

This ability has allowed some users of early WatchGuard models to get over six years usage from their appliances. Later WatchGuard models are even greener as they can increase performance, as well as functionality, through a licence key. So they provide an even greater opportunity for longevity, alongside energy savings.

The ability to increase performance and function is particularly relevant for companies with less than 200 users, where it is often difficult to predict traffic volumes, usage patterns, or indeed numbers of users, more than a year ahead.

Many growing companies find that they have to replace their existing solutions. Either they need more power or they want to add additional security capabilities to deal with new threats. The WatchGuard Firebox range of products was designed so that companies can add both greater performance capability and additional security functions through a licence upgradeable key, rather than throwing

out their old system and buying another one, thus preventing waste.

In addition, the Firebox firmware coding is designed for optimum performance. It is capable of carrying a considerable additional load effectively, with a structured performance degradation at the limits of performance. This is greatly preferable to 'silo' type UTM solutions, where the additional load can lead to a sudden rapid fall off in performance, then a total loss.

Recycling is another area where WatchGuard has committed itself to green principles. The company has established an attractive pricing structure for recycling its products in the field, which includes buy-back schemes to encourage people to move from less electrically efficient appliances onto more efficient ones. WatchGuard also provide a clear cut recycling structure for products that lie outside WEEE.

Paper product manuals can be a source of waste and require energy and materials to produce. WatchGuard uses paper manuals only when strictly necessary and offers CDs or online help to assist users.

As far as legislation on recycling and the use of toxic substances is concerned, WatchGuard products fully comply with WEEE, the European Community directive on waste electrical and electronic equipment which, together with the RoHS Directive, became European Law in February 2003.

WEEE sets collection, recycling and recovery targets for all types of electrical goods, including computer equipment. The RoHS directive restricts the use of certain substances (lead, mercury, cadmium, hexavalent chromium and two flame retardants - PBB and PBDE) in electrical and electronic products sold in the European Union after July 1, 2006. WatchGuard Technologies' e-Series products are fully compliant as of that date.

Computer equipment purchasers should be aware that there are companies selling RoHS exempt products today as opposed to ROHS compliant. Exempt products, (the exemption was provided to enable a manufacturing transition), while legal, still contain harmful substances.