

RE: ISA 2006 vs. BlueCoat

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It's my opinion they perform different functions. ISA is an application level FW with many good features (VPN, Secure Publishing, Proxy, etc) while Bluecoat is a very good proxy and web content filter appliance – capable of using filter applications/databases from many different vendors.

Functionality may have overlapped with the release of ISA server 2006, however. In my case, we've had Bluecoat for about 2 years and it's proven it's worth for in/out bound proxying, filtering, control, and user reporting.

I'm currently in the process of designing an Internet hosting solution that will continue to use Bluecoat on the inside, implement ISA2006 as an internal firewall and keep an existing packet filter firewall, externally. Should get interesting! In any case, I believe the secret is Defense in Depth and completely understanding what each product brings to the table.

"IT Guy" wrote:

First, I do NOT want to start a ISA 2006 vs. BlueCoat flame fest. But I would like some thoughtful input on my situation.

We are standardizing our proxy infrastructure, and narrowed our selection to two products. Part of the company is using an ancient version ISA and the other already has older BlueCoat devices. Everyone wants one standard, modern, proxy.

Quick background: Users are a member of regional AD domains, and logon to Windows clients. Proxy use will be mandatory, and we have existing firewalls which will be left alone. The group using BlueCoat really like them, and the ISA folks like ISA a lot.

Requirements include:

- Anti-virus and malware scanning
- Web content restrictions (porn, etc.)
- In-depth reporting features for usage/performance
- System administrator customizable error messages to inform the user why something was blocked
- Easily configurable white and black web site lists
- Hardware load balancing and fail-over
- Bandwidth throttling

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–Block or only allow specific web browsers/user agent strings

The Celestix ISA appliances look very attractive and the MSA6000e model has a lot of hardware redundancy. Likewise the nAppliance mISAE – Enterprise has a very similar feature set. Anyone have feedback on these two appliances, or recommend any others?

Does anyone have experience with ISA 2006 and BlueCoat? What are compelling reasons to choose ISA 2006? It appears I will need several third-party ISA add-ons to round out the feature set (AV scanning, web content blocking, bandwidth throttling, enhanced/centralized reporting, etc.). Laying on all of the different products may become a management headache.

Would I need to deploy the ISA client to desktops for full functionality, or can we use it agent-less and still meet all of our requirements?

I did see the interesting ISA/BlueCoat "exchange" on isaserver.org with Tom.

Thanks in advance.