

Benefits of Security as a Service

Businesses of all sizes today face an ever increasing dependence on their IT systems to run their operations and, as a result, they have become more sensitive to vulnerabilities and other IT security concerns. Add to that the increasing mobility of the workforce and the inherent difficulties in managing roaming devices, and what we have is an scenario in which the management of security operations becomes ever more complex, costly and sophisticated. In fact, many IT system failures and downtimes are caused by human errors due to the manual nature of managing traditional, on-premises IT management solutions. To make matters worse, according to Gartner, security staff are the most difficult IT resource to find and retain for SMBs¹, which represent the majority of the businesses today.

In order to address these challenges, new Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) solutions are emerging which can replace or extend the capabilities of traditional, on-premises products. In particular, SaaS management solutions for desktop anti-malware, such as Panda Managed Office Protection (PMOP), can be leveraged at anytime, from any web browser, providing simple, easy to use management of anti-malware and personal firewall protections.

The first benefit of a SaaS solution like PMOP, when compared with a traditional anti-malware protection for desktops, is the absence of upfront investments to implement it. Traditional protection for desktops require on-premises hardware and software investments (administration servers, repository servers, databases), introducing additional points of failure, added vulnerabilities and recurring maintenance and upgrading costs. A SaaS desktop anti-malware solution, on the contrary, hosts all the management infrastructure within the vendor's infrastructure. The savings in this regard will be bigger, the more distributed the environment is (usually each location in a distributed environment requires at least one server in the on-premises model). Considering an average implementation of an anti-malware solution in a medium-sized business, the savings of a SaaS-based solution could reach 50% of the total costs.

A second important benefit of a SaaS solution is that it enables the channel to provide value added services to end-users, something many of them are actively searching for, trying to regain the profitability they lost due to shrinking margins in hardware suffered during the past few years. According to AMI Partners, "Channel partners (CPs) focusing on selling to SMBs (small and medium businesses, or companies with up to 999 employees) in the United States are ramping up efforts to stake claims on the growing managed services and software as a service (SaaS) opportunities"². SMBs are expected to spend \$1.6 billion in SaaS, in 2008³. In the case of PMOP, channel partners can leverage a purpose-built "Partner Console", which allows them to efficiently manage the security solution across multiple customers, from one single web console, remotely, and without requiring any hardware or software investment either. Thus, SMBs have now the opportunity to outsource the management functions to the channel partner (an MSSP).

Finally, a third benefit consist in the natural fit of the SaaS approach to deal with the increasingly mobile workforce. Today, controlling and managing travelling employees with laptops is a source of concern for administrators. With a solution like PMOP, an administrator (or the MSSP) can remotely monitor and configure the anti-malware and personal firewall protections in laptops, regardless of their location or type of Internet connection.

¹ "Factors SMBs Should Consider When making an MSSp Selection". Gartner Research. Nov. 8, 2007.

² AMI-Partners Press Release, July 16, 2008.

³ AMI-Partners