



December 23, 2004

PRODUCTS OF THE YEAR:

GOLD AWARD:

F5's FirePass Controller v5.2



It's interesting, but perhaps not surprising, that all of the winners in our VPN category this year are SSL VPN gateways. Taking the primo prize is our Gold Award winner, the FirePass Controller v5.2 from F5 Networks Inc. The product offers clientless portal access, application access and full network access with a network appliance that resides on the network edge behind network firewalls.

It is available in the 1000 model, which provides access for up to 100 concurrent users, and the 4100, which provides access for up to 1000 concurrent users. The 4100 can be clustered and also supports optional SSL hardware acceleration to meet enterprise

performance needs.

Most important to our judges was the ease of integration that FirePass exhibits. It supports access to Web hosts, terminal servers, client-server applications, legacy hosts, mobile devices and Windows desktops, without pre-installed client software or application updates. It also automatically integrates support for existing authentication, identity management, antivirus and access privileges; administrators can simply point FirePass to the already-defined centralized infrastructure and automate user authentication and group management tasks.

FirePass also stands out because it offers full network access support to

any IP application across multiple platforms, including Windows, Linux, Macintosh, Solaris and PocketPC. Heightened security is another plus: On the network side, the product provides integrated application-layer security, including Web-application attack prevention and e-mail filtering and scanning. On the client side, FirePass includes a secure virtual keyboard that protects end points from keystroke loggers.

The main drawback to FirePass, according to our judges, is its price, which they noted is significantly higher than other SSL VPN products. The base price for 1000 concurrent users is \$69,990.

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