

## A10's low-priced IAM suite could lead migration to hardware in hard-fought sector

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**A10 Networks** has begun to ship its hardware identity and access management (IAM) appliance, the IDSentrie 1000. The company claims that the product simplifies administration by virtualizing multiple directories and other sources of ID data, and automatically provisioning employees and other users. The IDSentrie also can help investigate security incidents with its identity-correlated firewall log.

### Impact assessment

#### The message

A10 offers the most popular elements of a relatively costly IAM suite, all wrapped up in a hardware box that simplifies deployment and management.

#### Competitive landscape

There are 10 large IAM suite vendors: Beta Systems, BMC, Computer Associates, HP, IBM, Microsoft, Novell, Oracle, RSA Security and Sun. There are numerous makers of identity and access management point products: ActivCard, Avencis, BNX Systems, Citrix, Courion, Enatel, Encentuate, Evidian, Imprivata, M-Tech, MaXware, MetaPass, nCircle, Okiok, Passlogix, Radiant Logic, Tesis Sysware, Utimaco Safeware and Version3.

#### The 451 assessment

We're not entirely convinced that medium-sized and small enterprises are hungering for identity-based firewall logs, although the price of IDSentrie 1000 is low enough to stifle any complaints. Among all the IAM products, only Imprivata has packaged its product in hardware, and the Imprivata product is not a full suite. If the A10 components live up to their promise, there may be a full-scale migration to hardware in this hard-fought sector.

**Context** | A10 Networks was founded in 2004 and its headquarters are in San Jose, California. The company has a wholly owned subsidiary in Beijing. It has 50 employees.

**Technology** | The company claims that by enclosing authentication, ID management, firewall logging and reporting in a single, hardened appliance, it can provide small and middle-sized enterprises with identity-based management that correlates user activity with user identity. This combination can help comply with regulatory mandates and improve internal controls.

**Products** | The IDSentrie 1000 is a multifunction appliance that includes: a Radius and authentication proxy; a unified identity manager; a firewall log analyzer; and report-generation capabilities. Priced at \$12,000, the product is substantially less expensive than IDM software suites or access gateway appliances. For high-availability environments, a pair of appliances can be linked together.

The unified identity manager looks a lot like a metadirectory (though A10 calls it a virtual directory), consolidating identity data from Radius servers, directories, Kerberos and OSs. This function also supports automated provisioning and enforces password policies. The authentication proxy applies authenticated credentials to other secured systems, much like an enterprise SSO system. This component also enforces policy-based granular access controls.

The firewall log analyzer correlates identity information with firewall activity. For example, tracking inappropriate material to a specific user. It can also be employed for forensic investigations. The advanced reporting function runs on a correlated report engine, so reporting can be based on user identities. Policy compliance and activity reports are easy to compose.

**Competition** | The IAM suites from **IBM, Computer Associates, Hewlett-Packard, BMC Software, RSA Security, Sun Microsystems, Oracle, Novell, Beta Systems Software** and **Microsoft** have most of the functionality of the IDSentrie 1000 (though no one else puts a firewall log analyzer in an IAM suite). Some of the individual functions in these suites may have advantages over the A10 product. However, these suites from major vendors are priced five times, if not 25 times, the price of the IDSentrie 1000. Point products from such vendors as **ActivCard, Citrix, Courion, MaXware, nCircle, Radiant Logic, Avencis, BNX Systems, Enatel, Encentuate, Evidian, Imprivata, MetaPass, Okiok, Passlogix, Tesis Sysware, Utimaco Safeware** and **Version3** don't have the features of IDSentrie 1000 and some of them are also more costly than the A10 product.

#### SWOT analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
The aggressive pricing and hardware form factor could shake up the crowded IAM space.	A10 is quite young and just began shipping its first product.
Opportunities	Threats
The Chinese subsidiary indicates an intent to expand identity-based management along the Pacific rim.	All the startup potential troubles – funding, management, inventory (which comes with the hardware form factor) – will have to be solved.

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