

Gartner Secure Mail Gateway Magic Quadrant – 2008

Gartner published their last SMG (Secure Mail Gateway) Magic Quadrant in September 2008. This document looks at their comments and makes general observations from Clearswift's perspective on Gartner's findings.

The Magic Quadrant results were:

Challengers:

- Microsoft
- Trend Micro
- Barracuda Networks
- McAfee
- Websense

Niche Players:

- Sophos
- SonicWALL
- Messaging Architects
- PineApp

Leaders:

- Secure Computing (now McAfee)
- Google/Postini
- Symantec
- MessageLabs
- Proofpoint
- IronPort/Cisco

Visionaries:

- **Clearswift** (border with Niche)
- Webroot
- MX Logic
- BorderWare Technologies
- Marshal

There was no Magic Quadrant (MQ) in 2007, but in the 2006 version Clearswift had a very similar position. Symantec, MessageLabs, IronPort and Google/Postini were in the top right corner section. Microsoft moved from Leaders to Challengers. Proofpoint moved from visionaries to a leader which is surprising considering they retrenched in certain regions.

This is what Gartner said about Clearswift:

Clearswift

Strengths

- Clearswift is a veteran U.K.-based e-mail security company with a significant installed base in Europe, the Middle East and Africa, and in large, complex organizations worldwide.
- Spam-detection rates for Clearswift are much improved since the introduction of a reputation service and edge appliance version of its product. Spam classification by reputation alone is typically 78% of inbound spam. Legacy customers should upgrade to the most recent versions or add the edge.
- The image manager (software-only) pornographic-image-detection engine is a bonus, and bounce address tag validation (BATV) is supported.
- The browser-based management interface provides a clean, logical interface for policy development that is easy to use, even for nontechnical users. Strong directory synchronization capabilities are included.
- Policy development for content inspection/DLP is very good, and numerous policy constructs (for example, the U.S. Sarbanes-Oxley Act, the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act, Payment Card Industry and U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, as well as accounting terms and stock-market terms) are included.
- IM, Skype and person-to-person traffic controlling is handled by MIMESweeper IM Enterprise Edition, which uses the FaceTime IM Auditor and RealTime Guardian appliance.
- Web DLP policy and policy constructs, such as dictionaries, can be shared across appliances.

Strengths Commentary:

On a positive note the effort spent educating Gartner on our products has meant that they have a far better understanding (although still a slightly muddled one) of what our solutions will do.

- Bullet one is accurate and is positive, the words “significant”, “large” and “complex” are a testimony to our pedigree. It is true that our penetration of the US territory is not as extensive as in other areas, we do however have a good US customer presence in large organisations including: Alcoa (60k), The FBI (30K), Allina Health (17k), Banner Heath (12k), Westinghouse (12k), Chicago Bridge and Iron (10k) and numerous others of a smaller size.
- Bullet two is very positive and is a testimony to our improvements in this space. It also shows that they have listened to our repeated briefings with them. Over the past 24 months Clearswift’s spam detection has averaged in excess of 99.5%
- Bullet three is accurate; however the provision of BATV is very significant in the anti-spam market as it is very beneficial for dealing with “Backscatter” spam (non-delivery spam). This feature is not unique, but does not feature in the majority of other anti-spam products.
- Bullet four is accurate, considerable time and effort has been spent trying to build an Email (and Web) Appliance User Interface that permits strong policy configuration but with an air of simplicity.
- Bullet five is accurate and we are pleased that Gartner have made reference to it. Our email products have always been able to perform content inspection/DLP and this is a feature that our products do better than virtually any of rival, including IronPort.
- Bullet six **was true**, we did have a relationship with FaceTime, however that was dismantled in April 2008. We are surprised to find IM, Skype and P2P functionality listed as a feature of the Secure Mail Gateway, and not the Secure Web Gateway which is more fitting security area.
- Bullet seven is a reference to the conjoined (common) policy function between our Email and Web appliances, which permits more than just dictionaries to be shared, it also permits “Informs” and “Filename” lists to be shared.

So we sit on the boundary between “niche” and “visionary” this is a very good and strong recommendation from Gartner that reinforces our market value proposition. If a customer wants an all purpose product to provide anti-spam, anti-Malware and DLP capabilities then Clearswift products are well worth short listing.

Cautions Commentary:

Despite the positive acknowledgements of the newer range of Clearswift products in the strengths section Gartner still continue to focus on customers of ours who are running very old technology.

In reality 56% of our SMTP software customers are running versions 5.2.11 to 5.2.14 (dated Sept 07 to Mar 08). The other criticism (of the criticism) is that Gartner don’t qualify exactly which product they are referring to in these cautions.

Cautions

- Clearswift’s biggest challenge is, despite significant improvements, especially in the appliance, overcoming its legacy reputation for poor spam-detection performance and administrative overhead.
- As with other vendors with a legacy software installed base, it is a challenge to migrate customers to the appliance version. Some customers report that migration to new versions has been challenging in the past with Clearswift.
- Numerous customers use the product specifically for outbound policy compliance, a historic strength, rather than inbound protection.
- Some users report that the initial setup of the software product and day-to-day administration can be time-consuming.

- On a positive note, they acknowledge that the Appliance has improved significantly. It may be true that a very few customers have a bad feeling towards Clearswift; however the provision of the Edge Server to our SMTP customers was made in order to improve our standing for spam detection by customers who use our old software product for spam detection.
- Point two is accurate to an extent. We acknowledge some customers would be better suited to an Appliance, or that they should immediately migrate to the new Edge Server.
- Point three is surely a positive, a strength even! But we are also finding that the customers who deploy the Edge Server are removing competitive anti-spam technology too.
- Point four, the software product does have a more complex installation process, but it was designed to cater for everything from very small to very large customers and to offer the capabilities to handle any type of email environment. For the small customers, the installation is trivial, but obviously as the size and complexity of the customer configuration increases so does the complexity. Smaller customers will find everything they need in our email appliance, which is easy to set-up, and very easy to use.

In Summary:

From a Sales perspective there is nothing to counter the fact in this Gartner MQ that we have great email products, or anything to stop customers buying. The conclusion is really that this Gartner MQ is not particularly insightful, and that overall our email solutions continue to offer some of the best and most comprehensive email security technology available on the worldwide market.