the Helping You Buy series
Comparing Competing Library Technology Products
Your guide to vendor product facts

February: PC Management Software

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The June 2004 issue of *Computers in Libraries* was on the theme of Managing Computers for Staff and the Public. Authors discussed a number of products that can help save on the time, frustration, and cost of managing our growing public PC inventories. This article, part of *CIL*'s 2005 Helping You Buy series, provides an in-depth look at the PC management software products of 14 vendors. There is comprehensive vendor contact information at the end of the article to help you follow up on any products that interest you.

PC management software evolves every year. It now covers many categories—security, session management, computer setup, browser control, antivirus, anti-spyware, patch management, print management, Internet filtering, and others. To narrow the field for this article, we decided to only include products that provided extensive computer security features and were oriented toward library or education users. You will find that many of the products incorporate a number of other interesting and useful advanced features.

The product comparison chart will help you to quickly and easily compare products from competing vendors. All of the information on the product comparison chart came directly from the vendors. In some cases, responses were modified for brevity, clarity, or consistency. You should confirm that features that are important to you work the way that you need them to. I use the term "PC" in this article in the generic sense, since some of the products work on non-Windows platforms.

I have used or tested a number of the products that appear in this article. As the assistant director for information systems at The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center Library, I have been experimenting with such products for more than 10 years. Planning for and implementing such products has also been a major focus for my consulting company, Strategic Information Management Services.

The Security Features

When you put a computer into service in a public area, it is configured just the way that you want it. The big trick is keeping it that way. Many public access computer configurations can be changed and can lose their integrity over time. This can be a result of intentional or unintentional patron activities. It can also be the result of other changes in the larger computing environment.

You need to find the right balance of security and functionality. Too much security can restrict a patron from doing things that you both agree he or she should be able to do. Not enough security may put the computer and even the entire associated network at risk.

Each vendor has built a unique solution that helps you to establish the proper security versus functionality balance. Some products are designed to be restrictive; that is, they limit what the patron can do. The intention is to reduce or even eliminate the opportunity for many problems and surprises. Other products are nonrestrictive; they allow the patrons to do almost anything that they want. Then when the computer reboots, patron modifications are erased.

Some librarians have chosen to implement a combination of these tools. They recognize that patrons might penetrate the restrictive products. They are also concerned about the integrity of the systems between nonrestrictive product refreshes or reboots. Regardless of which approach you take, you may want to consider a phased implementation. Put a small number of computers out for staff and the public to test. Then you can tweak the security until you achieve the right balance with functionality. At that point, you can modify the remaining PCs.

There is one more issue that I would like to emphasize. It's not good enough anymore to just keep your public computers the way they were when they were put into service. They need to be updated in order to keep them secure and functioning. For example, if you use

	When was your product introduced?	How many installations? U.S.? Int'l.?	What is price structure based on? Initial price? Maintenance?	Was product created for libraries or other orgs?	Patrons authenticated against ILS db? Alternate db?	Describe technical support.	Can it make reservations for future dates? Via the Web?	Session time limits? Can staff override?	Different session limits for different groups?	What training is offered? Cost?	Is there network-based control?
3M—3M Public Access Management System	2000	30 U.S., 1 Canada	Initial price and annual subscription fee	Libraries	Via system's internal db; can interact with SIP2-compatible ILS	Core support 7 a.m. - 6 p.m. CST	Yes, yes	Yes, termination only	Yes	Remote in 1 or 2 sessions, or on-site for a fee	Session termination only
Bardon Data Systems Full Control	1998	300,000+ (for all products)	Per seat; site, company, & building licenses available	General security tool	No, no	Phone, fax, e-mail; on-site & after-hours by arrangement	No, no	Yes, yes	Yes	By phone, fax, e-mail at no extra charge; on-site by arrangement	Yes
Bardon Data Systems WinU	1995	300,000+ (for all products)	Per seat; site, company, & building licenses available	General security tool	No, no	Phone, fax, e-mail; on-site & after-hours by arrangement	No, no	Yes, yes	Yes	By phone, fax, e-mail at no extra charge; on-site by arrangement	Yes
Centurion Technologies CornerStone	New	New	Tiered pricing, one-time license fee w/ annual maintenance (optional renewal); leasing available	Any public access computer	No, no	Phone & e-mail support, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. CST	No, no	No, no	No	Available upon request	Yes, with CompuGuard Control Center
Centurion Technologies DriveShield	2002	Thousands U.S. & Int'l.	Tiered pricing, one-time license fee w/ annual maintenance (optional renewal); leasing available	Any public access computer	No, no	Phone & e-mail support 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. CST	No, no	No, no	No	Available upon request	Yes, NCLM is included; also CompuGuard Control Center
Comprise Technologies Smart Access Manager	1999	2,000+ No. Amer.	By location; maintenance fee per annum	Libraries	Any ILS product	7 a.m. - 9 p.m. EST	Yes, yes	Yes, yes	Yes	Included - 1/2 day	Yes

Reports on patron usage? On attempted violations?	Provides cost-recovery for printing?	What platforms does product run on? Require its own server?	Desktop security for important folders & files?	Desktop security to lock configuration?	Completely reset configuration after patron use?	Internet control to limit accessible URLs?	Internet control to filter usage?	Is patron-specific info wiped out at session end? If not, how long is it stored?	Menu for easy patron navigation?	Will it work with wireless devices?
Yes, no	Yes, based upon smart card	Windows 98, 2000, XP; local or hosted server required	No	No	Partial	Yes, by smart card or PC	Yes, by smart card or PC	Partially. Partial information erased at end of patron session.	No	Yes, requires smart card reader
Yes	No	All Windows; dedicated server not required	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Optionally yes. System setting.	No	Yes
Yes	No	All Windows; dedicated server not required	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Optionally yes. System setting.	Yes	Yes
No, no	No	Windows Me, 2000, XP; server not required	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes, on reboot; or when using new OOPs function. Temporary storage until reboot.	No	Yes
No, no	No	Windows 95 to XP; server not required (also MacShield for Mac)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes, on reboot. Temporary storage until reboot.	No	Yes
Yes	Yes	All Windows; requires NT server	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Configurable. Configurable.	Yes	Yes

Product	When was your product introduced?	How many installations? U.S.? Int'l.?	What is price structure based on? Initial price? Maintenance?	Was product created for libraries or other orgs?	Patrons authenticated against ILS db? Alternate db?	Describe technical support.	Can it make reservations for future dates? Via the Web?	Session time limits? Can staff override?	Different session limits for different groups?	What training is offered? Cost?	Is there network-based control?
Computers By Design CybraryN	1997	3,000+ U.S., 100+ Int'l.	Free, per computer, and quantity/ module levels; maintenance 15% of initial purchase price per annum	Libraries	Yes, and other databases with Patron Manager	8 a.m. - 6 p.m. EST, enhanced available	Yes, yes	Yes, yes	Yes	Free WebEx training	Yes, using CybraryNet module
Dynamic Designs Lockout Desktop Security	1998	1,000+ Int'l.	Home/ education pricing & business pricing; single, quantity & site; no ongoing maintenance fee	Education	Using Lockout License Server on NT	E-mail support	No, no	Yes, yes	No	On-site in U.K.	No
EnvisionWare PC Reservation	2000	1,700 U.S., 100 Int'l.	Number of clients, number of buildings, number of modules; maintenance optional	Libraries	Yes, yes	Web, phone, & e-mail; 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. EST, enhanced available	Yes, yes	Yes, yes	Yes	On-site and via Web, training videos are free	Yes
Faronics Deep Freeze Enterprise	1999	4,000,000+ U.S. & Int'l.	One-time license cost; optional annual maintenance	Education, libraries, government	No, possible	Via phone or e-mail, 7 a.m. - 5 p.m. PST only	No, no	No, no	No	User guides, technical white papers	Yes
Faronics FreezeX Standard	2004	10,000+ U.S. & Int'l.	One-time license cost; optional annual maintenance	Libraries & education	No	Via phone or e-mail, 7 a.m. - 5 p.m. PST only	No, no	No, no	No	User guides, technical white papers	No, planned for FreezeX Ent.
Faronics WINSelect	1995	200,000+ U.S. & Int'l.	One-time license cost	Libraries & education	No, possible	Via phone or e-mail, 7 a.m. - 5 p.m. PST only	No, no	No, no	No	User guides, technical white papers	No
Fortres Grand Clean Slate	2000	Millions U.S. & Int'l.	Number of computers or unlimited building licenses available	Education	No, no	Phone 7 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. EST, e-mail also	No, no	No, no	No	4-hour seminar; users conference 2x/year	Yes, using Central Control module

Reports on patron usage? On attempted violations?	Provides cost-recovery for printing?	What platforms does product run on? Require its own server?	Desktop security for important folders & files?	Desktop security to lock configuration?	Completely reset configuration after patron use?	Internet control to limit accessible URLs?	Internet control to filter usage?	Is patron-specific info wiped out at session end? If not, how long is it stored?	Menu for easy patron navigation?	Will it work with wireless devices?
Yes	Yes, using CybraryPrint module	All Windows; dedicated server not required, optional CybraryN Server	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes, system setting. System setting.	Yes	Yes
Yes, using Lockout Logging	No	Windows 95, 98, Me, XP; server not required	By hiding the file/folder	Yes	Yes	No	No	Partially erased, else admin access only. Admin access only.	No	Yes
Yes, yes	Yes, using LPT1: module	Windows 98, NT, 2000, XP; server not required	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes, admin-defined setting. Admin-defined setting.	Yes	Yes
No	No	Windows 95, 98, Me, 2000, XP; server not required (also Deep Freeze Mac OS X for Mac)	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes. N/A.	No	Yes
Yes, yes	No	Windows 95, 98, Me, 2000, XP; server not required	Can protect executables and DLLs	No	No	No	No	No. Indefinitely, until deleted.	No	Yes
No	No, but printing can be limited	Windows 95, 98, Me, NT, 2000, XP; server not required	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes. N/A.	No	Yes
No	No	Windows 95, 98, Me, NT, 2000, XP; server not required	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes. Admin-specified data can be retained.	No	Yes

	When was your product introduced?	How many installations? U.S.? Int'l.?	What is price structure based on? Initial price? Maintenance?	Was product created for libraries or other orgs?	Patrons authenticated against ILS db? Alternate db?	Describe technical support.	Can it make reservations for future dates? Via the Web?	Session time limits? Can staff override?	Different session limits for different groups?	What training is offered? Cost?	Is there network-based control?
Fortres Grand Fortres 101	1994	Millions U.S. & Int'l.	Number of computers or unlimited building licenses available	Libraries	No, no	Phone 7 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. EST, e-mail also	No, no	No, no	No	4-hour seminar for $1,250 base fee; users conference 2x/year	Yes, using Central Control module
Gates Foundation—Public Access Computer Security Tool	2003	Not tracked	Free, open source	Libraries	No, no	Support Web site securepc.org	No, no	No, no	No	None	No
Riverdeep FoolProof Desktop Security	1995	75,000 U.S. schools	Per unit or by school enrollment; no maintenance fees	K-12 schools	Via Windows server	Phone 7 a.m. - 7 p.m. CST	No, no	Yes, yes	Yes	Webinars and prof-devel classes offered	Yes
Userful DiscoverStation	2002	Customers across 13 states, provinces & Int'l.	Annual support contract	Libraries	Yes, yes	Phone 8 a.m. - 6 p.m. MST, e-mail & Web	Yes, yes	Yes, yes	Yes	Web-based free or on-site for fee	Yes, Web-based
Visual Automation Secure Desktop	1994	Thousands U.S. & Int'l.	Small-quantity price, or site & multisite license price plus annual maintenance	Initially factory-floor	No, no	E-mail & phone 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. EST	No, no	Idle timeout	No	Not necessary	No, .INI files easily copied
WinAbility Folder Guard	1997	Tens of thousands	Initial price, discount upgrades	Other	No, no	Web support	No, no	No, no	No	Free online documentation & user guide	No

Reports on patron usage? On attempted violations?	Provides cost-recovery for printing?	What platforms does product run on? Require its own server?	Desktop security for important folders & files?	Desktop security to lock configuration?	Completely reset configuration after patron use?	Internet control to limit accessible URLs?	Internet control to filter usage?	Is patron-specific info wiped out at session end? If not, how long is it stored?	Menu for easy patron navigation?	Will it work with wireless devices?
No	No	Windows 95, 98, Me, NT, 2000, XP; server not required	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
No	No	Windows 2000, XP Pro; stand-alone only	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes. N/A	No	Yes
No, yes	No	Windows 95, 98, Me, 2000, XP, Mac OS IX; server not required	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes. N/A	Yes	Yes
Yes, yes	Yes	Includes OS, works on any PC (x86)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Configurable. Configurable.	Yes	No
Yes	No	Windows 98, Me, NT4, 2000, XP, & Terminal Svcs. (2000/2003 server); server not required	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Partial, in development	Yes	Yes
No	No	Windows 98, Me, 2000, XP; server not required	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No

the Windows platform, you will need to apply Microsoft Critical Updates almost every month. You will also need to update your antivirus signature files at least daily.

Spyware is a huge category of malicious software. A number of effective free and fee-based anti-spyware solutions are now available on the market. However, you're not fully protected even if you are faithful about patching your systems and keeping antivirus signatures up-to-date. You can't underestimate the potential risks of spyware.

The Advanced Features

Many of the PC management systems that I cover in this article provide a number of interesting features in addition to desktop security. In some cases, they are an important part of the basic software

To Contact the Companies

3M Library Systems
3M Public Access
   Management System
3M Center
Building 225-4N-14
St. Paul, MN 55144-1000
(800) 328-0067
Fax: (800) 223-5563
http://www.3m.com/us/library

Bardon Data Systems
Full Control, WinU
1164 Solano Ave. # 415
Albany, CA 94706
(800) 922-2736
Fax: (510) 526-1271
support@bardon.com
http://www.bardon.com

Centurion Technologies, Inc.
DriveShield, CornerStone
512 Rudder Rd.
Fenton, MO 63026
(800) 224-7977
Fax: (636) 349-5431
sales@centuriontech.com
http://www.centuriontech.com

Comprise Technologies
Smart Access Manager
1026 Route 36
P.O. Box 425
Navesink, NJ 07752
(800) 854-6822
Fax: (732) 291-3699
http://www.comprisetechnologies.com

Computers By Design, Inc.
CybraryN
100 Comac St.
Ronkonkoma, NY 11779
(800) THE-TOWN

Fax: (888) THE-TOWN
http://www.cybraryn.com

Dynamic Designs Software
Lockout Desktop Security
49 Daleside Ave.
Pudsey, Leeds, West Yorkshire
LS28 8HB UNITED KINGDOM
011-44-7967-649429
http://www.dynamicdesigns.co.uk

EnvisionWare, Inc.
PC Reservation
2810 Premiere Pkwy. N.W.
Suite 350
Duluth, GA 30097-8917
(800) 216-8370
Fax: (678) 584-1232
info@envisionware.com
http://www.envisionware.com

Faronics
Technologies, USA, Inc.
Deep Freeze Enterprise, FreezeX
   Standard, WINSelect
2411 Old Crow Canyon Rd.
Suite 170
San Ramon, CA 94583
(800) 943-6422
support@faronics.com
http://www.faronics.com

Fortres Grand Corp.
Clean Slate, Fortres 101
P.O. Box 888
Plymouth, IN 46565
(800) 331-0372
Fax: (800) 882-4381
sales@fortres.com
http://www.fortres.com

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
Public Access Computer Security Tool
http://pacomputing.webjunction.org
http://securepc.org
The Gates group that created this product no longer exists; available now through http://www.webjunction.org

Riverdeep
FoolProof Desktop Security
100 Pine St.
Suite 1900
San Francisco, CA 94111
(415) 659-2000
info@riverdeep.net
http://www.riverdeep.net

Userful
DiscoverStation
928 6th Ave. S.W.
2nd Floor
Calgary, AB T2P 0V5 CANADA
(866) USE-RFUL
Fax: (403) 206-7010
sales@userful.com
http://www.userful.com

Visual Automation, Inc.
Secure Desktop
403 South Clinton St.
Suite 4
Grand Ledge, MI 48837
(517) 622-1850
Fax: (517) 622-1761
http://www.visualautomation.com

WinAbility Software Corp.
Folder Guard
244 W. Main St.
Rockville, UT 84763-0272
(801) 303-7310
http://www.winability.com

module. In other cases, these features require you to purchase additional modules from the vendor. These factors are detailed in the product comparison chart, but I'll highlight some of them here.

Patron authentication can be a very useful feature, especially when you have a large number of PCs. Some PC management applications can authenticate patrons against your integrated library system. For example, a patron may need to have a valid library bar code, fines less than $10, and be an adult resident to be able to use the Internet on a public PC. In some cases, you may need a special module installed on your ILS for patron authentication to work. Letting your ILS authenticate valid users eliminates the need to have staff interact with each potential computer user.

Reservation and session management features have become necessary in many libraries due to the popularity of their public access computers. You'll almost certainly want to consider these features for your public machines if you don't have them already. Evaluate which type of reservation system you need: Some of them allow patrons to make reservations via the Web for future usage times. And some session management systems allow you to set different time limits for different sets of patrons or for different sets of computers. Study your current usage trends to decide which will best serve your users.

You also need to think about which features will serve you the best as you manage your network of public computers. You might want a product that lets you do all upgrades at once over the network, or you may prefer to update each PC separately for various reasons.

Assess your reporting requirements as well. Many libraries need to justify continuing as well as future purchases. PC usage reports can provide the sort of management information that you need to justify additional equipment and software.

A few of the PC management tools listed here have print cost-recovery ca-

pabilities or add-ons for their systems. Some librarians have told me that their printing was reduced by as much as 90 percent when they started charging for it!

Many libraries have PCs dedicated to ILS browsing; some have PCs dedicated to other specific purposes such as accessing subscription databases. A few of the products in this article have the capability to restrict outbound Web access. Some of them also provide Internet filtering. These additional capabilities are available as part of the core package or as an add-on package.

And don't forget about wireless devices. If your library lends wireless devices such as laptops, you should double-check that a PC management application works with them. The use of such devices will probably increase over time.

Are You Ready to Buy Yet?

A lot of information is presented in this section, but you'll still need to do some homework on your own. Vendors regularly change the features of their products in order to improve them and to keep them competitive. New vendors enter the market and other vendors may merge or move in other directions.

Many of the vendors offer evaluation copies of their software. That is a good way to test the products in your unique environment prior to investing your dollars and time. You may want to settle on two or three products and then try them out. Of course, site visits and phone calls to other users can also be invaluable when learning about new technical products.

A Few Trends I've Noticed

PC management tools for libraries will continue to evolve. I can try to guess what some of the future changes will be based on past trends as well as current problems and needs.

On the security side, products will need to become more flexible to accommodate new threats. For example, many

information security experts discuss the concept of a "zero day" attack. This is a widespread attack on a computer vulnerability that is launched even before the system vulnerability is publicly announced. Many security product vendors are changing their approaches in light of the zero day attack and similar concepts. PC management products will need to adapt to new risks by quickly incorporating necessary modifications and enhancements.

Windows itself has become more secure, especially with the release of XP Service Pack 2. New products will adjust to take advantage of the new, more secure features of Windows.

On the advanced features side, integration and multifunctionality have been important trends. Products have been adapting to address a number of important library needs. For example, several systems now communicate with your ILS, offer print cost recovery or reservation management, and allow network-based control by the systems administrator.

Choosing which system to buy can be complicated, but this section should help you decide.   ▪

Richard Wayne has managed the systems group at The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center Library in Dallas since 1992. He does hands-on technical work with Windows, UNIX, Macintosh, PDAs, wireless, and other technologies. Prior to joining UT Southwestern, he was in the information technology field for more than 10 years in a number of technical and managerial capacities. Wayne is also the principal of Strategic Information Management Services (http://www.librarytechnology.com), a library technology consulting firm. He has worked with a wide range of library technologies in public, academic, and special libraries. His particular area of expertise is information security in the library environment. His e-mail address is richard.wayne@ut southwestern.edu.