

the Helping You Buy series

Comparing Competing Library Technology Products

Your guide to vendor product facts

June: Security-Control Software

BY RICHARD WAYNE

For the February 2005 issue of *Computers in Libraries (CIL)*, I had compiled a Helping You Buy section on PC management software products from 14 different companies. Whereas that section had a fairly broad scope, this one will be more tightly focused on security-control software products.

Security-control software has come a long way in the 10 or so years that I have been wrestling with it. New, advanced features can help a systems manager maintain the software and associated considerations in an efficient and cost-effective manner. The basic purpose of security control software is to help maintain the integrity of a public PC configuration. A library is one of just a few types of entities that allows not only familiar clientele, but even unknown persons, to use its computers. And patrons *do* use the computers—in most cases from opening until closing. Security-control software helps to keep the computer in safe and predictable working order.

This section includes a product comparison chart that 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 via a Web-based survey. In some cases,

responses have been modified for brevity, clarity, or consistency.

The Software Features

Although many of the features listed in the product comparison chart are self-explanatory, some may not be. For example, I asked vendors, How can changes be made to configured workstations using your product? because if a library has only a handful of computers, then going to each workstation to make changes may not be a big deal. But it *is* a big deal if you manage hundreds of computers. In that case, you want tools that can let you perform the modifications over the network. If you work for a library with a number of branches or for a consortium, you probably want tools that can help you make changes from a centralized site.

Another question to vendors was, Can the workstation's configuration be completely reset after patron use? This is a major design consideration for vendors in the security-control software market. Some choose to go the restrictive route. That is, they try to prevent the computer from getting changed or messed up to begin with. Other vendors choose to go the nonrestrictive route. That is, they let patrons do much of what they want to do and then refresh or totally clean up patron changes at

reboot. Some vendors use a combination of both strategies.

One important question was, Does your product accommodate the following (ongoing) types of system maintenance? The possible answers were operating system updates, antivirus software updates, anti-spyware software updates, along with can the updates be scheduled? These considerations had many of us stumped for a while. We knew that we needed to perform these updates to keep our workstations secure and functional. Yet, we had to jump through all sorts of hoops to make it happen. Now some vendors have added functionality into their products so that these critical tasks can be accommodated. What a relief!

One of the last questions was, Can the following potential patron activities be blocked: use of portable data storage such as a USB drive? Even my wife, who has poked fun at my tech savvy for many years, wears one of these nerd necklaces during her semester. USB drives are selling like hotcakes, and you may want to control their use in some instances.

A Couple of Special Notes

There were two questions that every vendor gave the same answer for. So, to save room in the chart, we've deleted the questions from there and will give you the facts here in the text: 1) None of these products requires a dedicated server. 2) Every product works with

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	What year was this product introduced?	What is your pricing structure based on? Initial price? Any maintenance fee?	Was it created primarily for libraries or other types of orgs?	Describe customer technical support options (OL=Online, OS=On-site, T=Telephone, O=Other)	What training do you offer? (R=Reference material, W=Web-based, V=at vendor facility, OS=On-site, O=Other)	How can admins make changes to configured workstations? (W=at individual workstation, S=from server, R=from remote site)	What platform(s) does it run on? (W=Windows, M=Mac, L=Linux)
Bardon Data Systems <i>WinU</i>	1995	Per-seat or enterprisewide license	Other	OL, OS, T, O	R, W, V, OS, O	W, S, R	W
Bardon Data Systems <i>Full Control</i>	1995	Per-seat or enterprisewide license	Other	OL, OS, T, O	R, W, V, OS, O	W, S, R	W
Centurion Technologies, Inc. <i>Centurion Guard</i>	1996	Public and edu libraries get discounted rate starting at \$40 per workstation + annual maintenance fee required for 1st yr (optional renewal). Tiered pricing structure	Other	OL, T, O	R, O	W, S, R	W, M
Centurion Technologies, Inc. <i>CornerStone</i>	2004	Tiered pricing discounted for libraries and edu. Starts at \$19.03 per license (one-time cost).	Other	OL, T, O	R, W, O	W, S, R	W, M
Faronics Technologies USA, Inc. <i>WINSelect 5</i>	1997	Initial price	Libraries	OL, T	R, O	W	W
Fortres Grand Corp. <i>Fortres 101</i>	1994	Site or # of computers. No maintenance fee	Libraries	OL, OS, T, O	R, OS, O	W, S, R	W
Fortres Grand Corp. <i>Clean Slate</i>	2000	Site or # of computers. No maintenance, free tech support	Education	OL, OS, T, O	R, OS, O	W, S, R	W
Fortres Grand Corp. <i>Clean Slate Snap-in for the Microsoft Shared Computer Toolkit</i>	2005	Site or # of computers. No maintenance fee	Education	OS, T, O	R, OS	W	W
Horizon DataSys, Inc. <i>RollBack Rx</i>	2005	Volume-based discounts. Single PC cost is \$39. Free unlimited tech support. No annual maintenance fee	Other	OL, T, O	R, W, OS, O	W, S, R	W
Horizon DataSys, Inc. <i>LockDown Rx</i>	2005	Volume-based discount. Single license costs \$39. Free unlimited tech support. No annual maintenance fee	Education	OL, T, O	R, W, O	W	W
Ixis Research Ltd. <i>Public PC Desktop</i>	2005	# of computers	Libraries	OL, OS	R, W, OS	W	W
Riverdeep Inc., LLC <i>FoolProof Security</i>	Not Available	Licensing	Education	OL, T	R, W	W, S, R	W, M
Visual Automation, Inc. <i>Secure Desktop</i>	1994	Single: \$195, 5-pack: \$700, 10-pack: \$1,275	Other	OL, T	R, W	W, S, R	W
WinAbility Software Corp. <i>Folder Guard</i>	1997	Initial price	General use	OL	R, W	W	W

<i>Does it protect the following: (F=Important files & folders, C=Workstation configuration, CM=CMOS configuration, P=Multiple partitions, HD=Multiple hard drives)?</i>	<i>Can the workstation's configuration be completely reset after patron use?</i>	<i>Can patron-specific info be erased at session end or at a set time?</i>	<i>Does it accommodate these types of system maintenance/ updates? (OpS=Operating sys, AV=Antivirus, AS=Anti-spyware, SCH=scheduled updates)</i>	<i>How is your software updated at the customer's site? (U=Update button in software, CD=CD distribution, D=Download, O=Other)</i>	<i>Does it provide workspace for patron data?</i>	<i>Can these patron activities be blocked? (USB=USB drive, D=Downloads, I=Software installations)</i>	<i>Can it allow a unique profile for each type of user?</i>
F, C, P, HD	Yes	N/A	OpS, AV, AS, SCH	CD, D	Yes	USB, D, I	Yes
F, C, P, HD	Yes	N/A	OpS, AV, AS, SCH	CD, D	Yes	USB, D, I	Yes
F, C, CM, P, HD	Yes	Yes	OpS, AV, AS, SCH	D	Yes	USB	Yes
F, C, CM, P, HD	Yes	Yes	OpS, AV, AS, SCH	U, O	Yes	USB	Yes
F, C	No	No	OpS, AV, AS	D	Yes	I	No
F, C, CM, P, HD	No	No	OpS, AV, AS	U, CD, D	Yes	USB, D, I	Yes
F, C, CM, P, HD	Yes	Yes	OpS, AV, AS, SCH	U, CD, D	Yes		Yes
F, C, P, HD	Yes	Yes	OpS, AV, AS	U, D	Yes	D, I	No
F, C, P	Yes	Yes	OpS, AV, AS, SCH	D, O	Yes		Yes
F, C, P, HD	Yes	N/A	OpS, AV, AS, SCH	D	Yes	USB, D, I	Yes
F, C, P, HD	Yes	Yes		D	Yes	USB, D, I	No
F, C, CM, P, HD	Yes	No	SCH	CD, D	Yes	USB, D, I	Yes
F, C, P, HD	Yes	Yes	OpS, AV, AS, SCH	D	No	USB, D, I	Yes
F, C, P, HD	No	N/A	OpS, AV, AS, SCH	U, D	N/A	USB, D, I	Yes

DISCLAIMER: While the author and editors have made all efforts to include every product that fit our criteria, this may not be an exhaustive list. This section is designed to be a shopping aid for CIL readers, and we remind them to check for other products and for updated facts before they make any purchases. The publisher does not assume any liability for errors or omissions.

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wireless devices such as laptops and tablet PCs.

Please note that one product in this article, Centurion Guard, has a hardware component in addition to a software component.

Also, Microsoft chose not to provide data on its new Shared Computer Toolkit (SCT). But you can find a discussion on the SCT, which was designed to help set up, safeguard, and manage shared computers that run Windows XP, in the Dec. 27, 2005, issue of *PC Magazine*.

Test Before Purchasing

This article and its companion product comparison chart should serve as a guideline only. Each library has a different set of needs and a different set of patrons. Use the information presented here to launch further research.

You might narrow your field down to two or three products that meet your requirements, then test them. Most software vendors offer free evaluations of their products.

THE BASIC PURPOSE OF SECURITY-CONTROL SOFTWARE IS TO HELP MAINTAIN THE INTEGRITY OF A PUBLIC PC CONFIGURATION.

Put a prototype out in a public area so that both your staff and your patrons can check it out. It's easier to

learn the strengths and weaknesses of a configuration before replicating it to every desktop and laptop in your library. One model that I developed at the University of Texas Southwestern library did not show problem signs until it was on about a dozen computers. Then the computers started randomly and spontaneously crashing. It was back to the drawing board!

In one instance where a consulting project timeline was very tight, I invited my tech-savvy 21-year-old son to help me with some early testing and troubleshooting. Within an hour, he was into the records on a city police server. That got some quick remedial attention from city information technology personnel. My point is that you need to test even your most basic assumptions.

Before you buy, talk to staff in libraries that use your top choices. That sort of reality check can be invaluable

To Contact the Companies

Bardon Data Systems

Full Control, WinU
1164 Solano Ave. #415
Albany, CA 94706
(510) 526-8470
<http://www.bardon.com>
info@bardon.com

Centurion Technologies, Inc.

Centurion Guard, CornerStone
512 Rudder Rd.
Fenton, MO 63026
(800) 224-7977
<http://www.centuriontech.com>
andrea@centuriontech.com

Faronics Technologies USA, Inc.

WINSelect 5
2411 Old Crow Canyon Rd.
Suite 170
San Ramon, CA 94583
(800) 943-6422, ext. 4081

<http://www.faronics.com>
shaun@faronics.com

Fortres Grand Corp.

Clean Slate, Clean Slate Snap-in
for Microsoft's SCT, Fortres 101
P.O. Box 888
Plymouth, IN 46563
(800) 331-0372

<http://www.fortresgrand.com>
sales@fortresgrand.com

Horizon DataSys, Inc.

LockDown Rx, RollBack Rx
1685 H St. # 846
Blaine, WA 98230
(604) 324-0797
<http://www.horizondatasystem.com>
sales@horizondatasys.com

Ixis Research Ltd.

Public PC Desktop
(Internet-only company)
<http://www.softheap.com>

Riverdeep Inc., LLC

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

Visual Automation, Inc.

Secure Desktop
403 S. Clinton St., Suite 4
Grand Ledge, MI 48837
(517) 622-1850
<http://www.visualautomation.com>
sales@visualautomation.com

WinAbility Software Corp.

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

in making sure that your investment is headed in the right direction.

Some Closing Thoughts

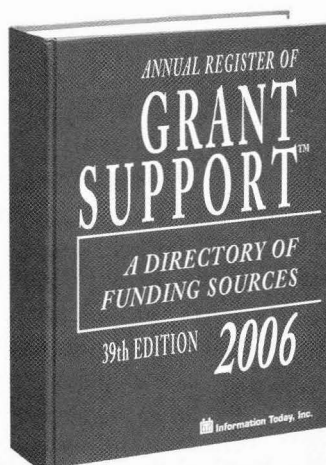
I think it's safe to say that most security-conscious technical people would recommend constant vigilance with regard to desktop and network security. You need to provide access to only the resources required and no others (such as the city police server). Minimally, you need to perform regular operating system updates and also ensure that antivirus, anti-spyware, and firewall software are up-to-date and working properly. It's a good practice to audit a sample of your public computers regularly to see what surprises and anomalies might have developed during heavy use. A product such as Microsoft's Baseline Security Analyzer can help you to check up on your computers over your network.

Find a configuration and a product that work for you. If you plan, develop, and test carefully, you can save yourself and your library much time and many headaches down the road. ■

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, PDA, 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 and strategic planning 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@utsouthwestern.edu.

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