



WAN MANAGEMENT APPLIANCE

Cynetix Cyshape CA200

PRICE £1,370 (exc VAT) BASIC WARRANTY 1yr on-site NBD
INTERNET www.cynetix.co.uk SUPPLIER The Cynetix Group 01709 819922
VERDICT An easily deployed solution for monitoring and managing WAN links that will ensure you get the best out of your corporate Internet connection.

High-capacity WAN links are an expensive commodity – especially at the enterprise level.

So it's important that businesses get the best value out of their Internet connections to avoid a costly upgrade. That means monitoring and managing them effectively to ensure existing bandwidth isn't being wasted. The Cyshape CA200 is designed specifically for this purpose and offers the ability to monitor and restrict Internet traffic, allowing you to prioritise critical applications.

The CA200 is a complete system built around the Linux-based AstroFlowGuard application from NetSoft. You can purchase the software separately from Cynetix as a bootable ISO CD-ROM image and run it on your own hardware, but the CA200 is designed to be as plug-and-play as possible. It comes as a 1U



Take control of how your Internet connection is used with this headless appliance.

rack server with the software pre-installed, and the price includes a decent hardware specification. The software is licensed for the size of the WAN interface it will be controlling; the price of the review unit supports up to 2Mb/sec WAN links.

Prior to delivery, Cynetix requests some basic information about your environment and then configures the unit specifically for your network. There isn't actually much to be

done here and hardware installation doesn't require any major upheaval. The appliance functions as a transparent bridge so you can slot it in between your LAN and WAN. This creates a single point of failure for critical services, but the CA200 does support a fail-over mode comprising primary and secondary servers running in parallel. Adding a monitor and keyboard allows you to access the software locally for basic configuration, but the system is designed to be headless and managed remotely via a browser.

The concept used for traffic control is remarkably simple: you create classes for inbound and outbound traffic that specify a particular bandwidth in Mb/sec or Kb/sec. You can state whether bandwidth is guaranteed or whether no restrictions apply; schedules can be applied to determine when classes are active. Next, you add filters to the class to decide which protocols and ports are to be affected. We found it simple enough to control our email by creating two classes for guaranteeing inbound and outbound bandwidth, adding the TCP protocol and selecting the POP3 and SMTP ports.

The appliance comes with 247 port definitions already created for common traffic, but you can easily add new definitions. Classes are handled top to bottom in the exact order

they're listed on the appliance. Any traffic that matches high-priority classes and filters gets processed first and you can easily move classes up and down the list as required.

Once the appliance is on the network, it's in a position to monitor all traffic and if it sees one application consuming too much bandwidth, it throttles it back to allow others to achieve their allotted throughput. You can also restrict certain applications to a specific amount of bandwidth, so they'll never be allowed to take over the entire WAN link.

The Report Manager also provides plenty of data on bandwidth usage, with a range of tables and graphs for inbound and outbound traffic. Basic network analysis is also on offer as it provides details on the top talkers on the network plus the busiest classes, and tops this off with protocol distribution charts.

DAVE MITCHELL

PC PRO RATINGS

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES & DESIGN	★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★
OVERALL	★★★★★

SPECIFICATIONS 1U rack system; MSI MS-6580 motherboard; 1.8GHz Pentium 4; 512MB PC2700 SDRAM; 80GB Maxtor IDE hard disk; 2 x Intel PRO/100 S Server adaptors; Linux kernel, NetSoft AstroFlowGuard software pre-installed, licensed for 2Mb/sec WAN link. Options: Firewall, £295; IDS, £295