Firewall FAQs

What is a firewall?

A firewall physically sits between your network and the Internet and hides your network from others on the Internet. At its most basic level, a firewall is really an Internet router that makes decisions on what to let in and out of your network and what to block. Although no technology can guarantee complete safety, a properly designed network with a firewall system, reputable antivirus software, and alert support staff can significantly reduce the risk.

Why do I need one?

Armies of automated attackers are out there, probing for weaknesses every minute of every day. A bad guy from across the world with a political agenda wants to use your bandwidth to attack his enemy. A Russian mobster wants to hijack your Internet connection to help attack an offshore gambling website. A high-school teenager with time on his hands wants to make a name for himself in the underground cracker community. You don't want to be an easy target for these guys.

Assuming I need a firewall, what choices are available?

At the low end of the market are $100 – $200 packages that offer limited capability and very little capacity. Installation and ongoing support cost more. If you have a network with 5 computers or less, your business will never grow, and communicating via the Internet isn't very important to you, consider one of these appliances. In the mid range are more sophisticated appliances for $3000 - $5000. These will work with networks of up to a few hundred computers. Installation and ongoing support cost more. At the high end are enterprise systems priced at $10,000 or more, designed to handle very large, very complex networks. Installation and ongoing support cost significantly more.

Sounds like the market is pretty much covered – how does Infrasupport fit in?

Standing on the shoulders of giants, Infrasupport is pleased to offer firewall protection priced in the low-end range, but with many of the same capabilities of today's enterprise systems. ***While others deliver a hardware package in a cardboard box, Infrasupport delivers a fully deployed solution***. The project isn't complete until the firewall demonstrates it's doing its job. After comparing the true total cost of acquiring, installing, and supporting other firewall systems, the Infrasupport firewall system costs no more than the low-end appliances.

How can you possibly offer this? How does it work?

Infrasupport packages a physically small hardware platform with powerful open source tools to set up a firewall system tailored to your exact needs. We make this offer – and deliver it profitably – because we use rock-solid, open source software.

Infrasupport uses the exact same software tools large commercial firewall vendors incorporate into their products. The difference - Infrasupport embraces the open source model and operates transparently. No hidden fees, no upgrade charges for additional users, no additional license expense for more capability, no secret interfaces. Infrasupport makes money from delivering the fixed price firewall installation projects and ongoing support agreements with customers who want such support, along with network upgrade projects as customers request them.

My network is very large and complex – what can you offer me?

The Infrasupport firewall system can do incredibly sophisticated routing to handle diverse populations of users. We can load-balance among several incoming telecom circuits and we can dedicate different Internet circuits to different groups of systems or users. We can set up DMZ networks, honeypots, and other peripheral networks adjacent to your internal network. We can help eradicate virus and worm attacks, troubleshoot connectivity problems, and assist application programs that need to communicate with outside systems. We can monitor your key servers and Internet connections and notify you when problems come up. We can shape traffic to ensure time-critical data such as VOIP and videoconferencing get top priority.

The Infrasupport firewall system can handle dozens or hundreds of internal web, DNS, email, ftp, and other servers that need to be visible across the Internet.

We also offer virtual private networks (VPNs), so you can use the Internet to work from home or connect branch sites. Given a properly designed server configuration, you can literally use an l VPN to run your entire network from anywhere on the planet Earth with an Internet connection.

My network is very small – how can I afford what you're offering?

Compare the **total** cost for an Infrasupport firewall system with an entry-level appliance.

When that entry-level appliance arrives in the cardboard box, you must unpack it, figure out how to plug it in, and figure out how to set it up. You can either struggle with it yourself or pay somebody else to do it. Either way, this costs time and money.

Once you finally have it all up and running, how do you know it's working? So now, you must sink more time and money into this appliance figuring out how to monitor it – assuming it even has monitoring/logging tools. Suddenly, that appliance costs much more than its initial acquisition price.

With Infrasupport, a senior consultant works with you during presales, finding out all the relevant information about your network. Infrasupport then builds a system tailored for you and ensures it's installed properly. For customers with an interest, Infrasupport also provides a tour of what's inside.

When your organization grows and becomes more complex, your Infrasupport firewall system will handle it. No more disrupting your operation to add more capability.

Now which system do you think is more expensive?

My business is in the cloud and I have nothing important to protect at my office. Why bother?

Because if your Internet connection is down, so is your business. All access to everything important to your business depends on that Internet connection. When the inevitable outage occurs, where is the problem? Is it a telecom issue, a router issue, building wiring, a software problem, or something else? A few simple tests directly from an Infrasupport firewall system will provide valuable diagnostics to help quickly isolate the problem.

More common than outages, what if the Internet suddenly becomes "slow"? Why is it slow? Maybe somebody has a virus and is flooding your Internet connection with offending traffic. Or maybe you're just doing lots of business and outgrowing your bandwidth. The Infrasupport firewall system can help you find out so you can make a smart decision on what to do about it.

This all sounds great on paper, but lots of ideas sound good on paper. Beyond clever text editing what can you show me that's tangible and real?

Give Infrasupport a call and we will show you our own Infrasupport firewall system. You can also talk to our growing list of delighted customers.

What about ongoing support?

Infrasupport is pleased to offer an innovative ongoing support plan that includes remedial assistance, along with emergency and routine hardware replacement. When new versions of software become available, most vendors require customers to go through a complex and risky upgrade process. When a new release of the Infrasupport firewall system becomes available, Infrasupport will send out a fully configured system, tailored exactly for your organization. Simply unplug the old system, plug in the new system, and send the old system back to Infrasupport.

But isn't it safer and easier and less expensive and less risk for me to deal with a large, well-known company? Why should I trust Infrasupport?

A rational analysis of history reveals that "bigness" versus "smallness" is a lousy yardstick to measure risk.

Does anyone still own computers from Burroughs, Univac, NCR, Control Data, and Honeywell? More recently, how about Digital Equipment Corporation and Compaq? The business world is littered with big names and so-called "safe" companies no longer in business.

Infrasupport is a very small company with less than $1 million in annual revenue. And yet Infrasupport generated more profit and cash flow recently than Worldcom, Qwest, Enron, Lucent, Tyco, Adelphia, AT&T, General Motors, AIG, and the entire finance and airline industries combined. So who is more stable than whom?

Dig deeper. Challenge what we say. Educate yourself, beyond anyone's vendor hype. Consult textbooks, independent web sites, and other objective literature. Talk to other customers. Conduct your proper due diligence and learn the truth – the *real* truth.

Give Infrasupport an opportunity to prove it can do what we say it can do. Make an informed, rational choice. The Infrasupport firewall solution makes the most sense.

InfraSupport
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