

~ Product Introduction ~

The emergence of 802.1X for port-based authentication and Extensible Authentication Protocol (EAP) as a signaling medium in Trusted Computing initiatives has given network administrators the opportunity to dramatically improve the security profile of wired and wireless networks. Like any IT initiative, the benefits of implementation must be measured against the risk and cost involved in the deployment and ongoing administration of that technology. In the case of strong authentication, there is one particular challenge in the deployment and management of strong authentication that must be considered prior to deployment; the identification of all non-EAP end points and the individual port configuration of each port/interface in the network.

This means that the network administrator must know where 100% of the non-EAP devices are prior to deploying strong authentication and must be able to configure the appropriate ports based on this understanding. Common non-EAP endpoints include: Printers, VOIP Phones, FAX/Scanners, managed Uninterruptible Power Supplies, HVAC systems, Inter-switch links, Wireless Access Points, etc, all of which must be located to prevent them from becoming isolated when 802.1X is deployed.

Great Bay Software Inc. has created a solution to address these challenges called Beacon. The Beacon system is designed to provide the network administrator with all of the required information to deploy and manage an authentication-enabled network.

The system profiles network endpoints and accurately portrays the state of the network edge leading up to, and following, the deployment of strong authentication. More specifically, Beacon works by combining numerous sources of information including



results from monitoring network traffic at aggregation points, profiling end stations based on behavior, mapping the network topology, and continuously monitoring the port states of the appropriate ports in the system.

Once the end point type and location are understood, the time and cost savings in the deployment of strong authentication are realized. In addition, the information that is learned and continuously updated by Beacon provides the foundation for identity and location tracking of all network attached endpoints. Beyond facilitating the deployment and administration of strong authentication, Beacon provides the network administrator with the functionality critical for initiatives that include regulatory compliance, e911 services, help desk applications, asset tracking, and change management.

In total, the Beacon system provides a number of benefits in enabling the deployment of strong authentication including time and cost savings during planning and deployment, asset tracking by type and location, and real time visibility into the identity and location of all end points in the network.

For more information, please contact us at:
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