

Foolish Wisdom: Cisco Networks, Firewalls and VPNs for The Motley Fool



IN 1993, DAVID AND TOM GARDNER FOUNDED THE MOTLEY FOOL AS A FINANCIAL NEWSLETTER SERVING JUST 60 READERS. DEDICATED TO AMUSING, EDUCATING, AND ENRICHING INDIVIDUALS IN SEARCH OF FINANCIAL TRUTH, THE BROTHERS GARDNER TOOK THE NAME FROM A TRADITION IN ELIZABETHAN DRAMA WHERE ONLY THE COURT JESTER—THE FOOL—COULD TELL THE KING THE TRUTH WITHOUT LOSING HIS HEAD.

In today's financial environment, the Fools believe that by learning together people can find the best way to invest in the stock market, buy a house or car, or handle their credit cards responsibly. Without the right education, the world of personal finance can be intimidating and confusing—but the Fools are hard at work, every day, to change all that. With news, commentary, investment strategies, company and industry research, and step-by-step portfolio management tools, The Motley Fool can help just about anyone understand personal finance and investing.

Not Fooling Around: Greater Exposure and Global Growth Demand Security

From its humble newsletter beginnings, The Motley Fool has grown into a very successful multi-media company. The Fools now offer products and services across a variety of media, including:

- Domestic and international Web sites available in the US at www.fool.com and on America Online (keyword: Fool), in the UK at www.fool.com.uk and on America Online (keyword: FoolUK) and in Germany at www.fool.com.de
- Five Simon & Schuster books (all New York Times bestsellers!)
- Premium products line (including online seminars, self-published books and Motley Fool Research)
- A syndicated weekly newspaper column, (currently appearing in more than 190 U.S. publications)
- Daily broadcast of "Market Minutes" and a weekly "Motley Fool Radio Show" (both joint ventures with Cox Radio and heard on more than 135 U.S. stations)

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Joel Salamone

MIS Director

The Motley Fool

Significant growth in the business has also brought increased and significant exposure to security hazards. So, it has become even more critical for The Motley Fool to safeguard its information and intellectual property both on its Web sites and throughout the business generally.

Guarding Foolish Assets

The Motley Fool's headquarters, in Alexandria, Virginia, along with the Web farm that hosts their Web site, needed

protection against a hostile external network environment—the same public Internet that delivers great information to the outside world needs to be protected from unwanted Internet visitors. While The Motley Fool network is Cisco-based, there are still many firewall solutions from which to choose. The Fool's IT department evaluated several software-based solutions, but decided against them, because operating

systems have to run many different services, performing a variety of different functions. Each service running can degrade the capabilities that a software-based firewall must deliver.

The evaluation team felt that a software solution wouldn't be as robust, or as hard to penetrate as a Cisco PIX Firewall solution. At the same time, because they already had Cisco networking gear in place, PIX's similar management interface and configuration shortened training time, and guaranteed easier administration. Joel Salamone, The Motley Fool's MIS Director, explained: "The Cisco PIX is exactly what we wanted—a specialized appliance. This means that there is no extraneous software cluttering the operating system that can be exploited. If there is a problem, it's likely

to be pretty obvious and it's going to be something that Cisco can address immediately. In addition, the number of maximum possible connections running through PIX is more than enough to accommodate the Fool's needs."

The Motley Fools don't think it's smart to fool around with security so they rely on Cisco Secure PIX solutions to protect their network.

Communicating Foolish Secrets Securely

Another sign of The Motley Fool's growing success is its international expansion. With new offices in the UK and Germany, the Fools need the ability to communicate securely between sites. When these sites went live, communications between them were often simple email, or even standard post. Some business functions were simply not supported, because there was no secure network for them.

Dedicated leased lines, especially internationally, are secure, but very expensive. They didn't make sound financial sense to the Fools—but virtual private networks (VPN) did.

Installing a Cisco 7000 family router at each site, and securing each of those routers with PIX firewalls, created a VPN where all three sites—the US, UK, and Germany—could easily communicate and run important networked applications securely. Today, traveling Fools can safely log on to their own desktops to access vital business information—across an ocean or a continent.

Learning More Foolish Wisdom

If you want to find out more about personal finance and The Motley Fool, visit www.fool.com. If you want to know more about Cisco security and VPN solutions, visit the Cisco Systems Web site at www.cisco.com.



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