

Arbor Networks adds big data analytics to its SP portfolio

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Summary

Arbor Networks has announced the release of its new SP Insight technology. SP Insight adds big data analytics capabilities to Arbor's extensive SP network visibility and reporting platform. The Arbor Networks SP platform, previously known as Peakflow SP, helps organizations detect and deal with cyber threats, as well as improve traffic flow and network performance. The new Insight product, which operates as an integrated extension to the core SP platform, will enable Arbor clients to work more effectively and flexibly with their network and traffic flow data. It will help them create more detailed context on the usage and threat data that is important to the wellbeing of their systems and networks.

Deploying big data and analytics projects in isolation is never going to be good enough

Big data architectures, data analytics, and data lake technologies are presented as forces for good when network and data management vendors highlight their abilities to glean better levels of knowledge from the growing silos of data that organizations continue to amass. They are marketed as effective and relevant technologies for businesses that want to gain controlled access to a wide range of data resources and are looking to improve insight to gain a competitive edge, or in the case of IT security, to know more about the threats coming their way.

These are relevant and practical uses for big data operations and associated analytics capabilities. However, a regularly repeated criticism whenever IT vendors attempt to bolster their security intelligence credentials by throwing out the big data and security analytics lifeline is that there is an urgent need to see genuine and provable benefits delivered.

As far as the genuine and demonstrable benefits equation is concerned, organizations are struggling with a technology skills shortfall, and this is especially true within the IT security intelligence sector. What this means for projects that involve the analysis and interpretation of threat data is that IT often doesn't have the time or the skilled resources to understand the outcomes and make use of the data-driven insights provided. It is also fair to say that the technology suppliers need to do more to help these clients. Many claim the ability to draw business-focused intelligence from big data solutions, yet few seem able to deliver on their promise in a way that is practical and beneficial. What is needed is the integrated use of big data and analytics to meet the data-focused usage and protection requirements of their customers.

SP Insight brings data relevancy to the table

Big data projects need to be made more practical, relevant, and usable for the organizations that need to make operational sense of the information on offer. These are some of the key issues that Arbor Networks is looking to address with the release of its new SP Insight product. For Arbor Network users combining the user experience of SP with a better understanding of the data being processed, the use of the big data and analytical capabilities of SP promises familiarity and usability. It also offers new data management and analysis capabilities that create a more detailed picture of network traffic flows, supported by visual analytics for exploring and drilling down into the data.

Initially the target market will be existing Arbor Network customers, which will bring the added benefits of a customer base that has the technical skills needed to quickly gain maximum value from the product. They will already have the network experience, traffic flow visibility, and threat detection knowledge from using the core SP platform, and in many ways these customers were the driving force for this initiative.

SP Insight adds data enrichment and context to the proposition. Its multi-dimensional search and filtering capabilities, along with the ability to maintain granular controls over data across extended timeframes, will help deliver the levels of understanding and perception enterprise organizations are looking to achieve. Elements such as detailed retrospective drill-downs and the ability to pivot from graphical to tabular visualizations all add value, as does the ability to maintain visibility over threat data and associated events across the complete lifecycle of an attack.

All organizations want better network data and threat intelligence

SP Insight will initially be brought to market as an extension to Arbor Networks' existing deployments, and will be promoted as a simple product upgrade that involves a commitment to an additional product license. It will provide Arbor users with the big data and analytical capabilities needed to work more effectively with their network and threat data. The data lake side of the SP Insight operation will add long-term storage of flow data and allow multi-dimensional visual analysis across the data management lifecycle. It will also provide the capacity to store raw data for as long as is needed and will support both real-time and historical analysis. The complete solution will be delivered using a common central console approach for SP and SP Insight, and will offer the single-pane-of-glass methodology that enterprise organizations require.

SP Insight, which launched in November 2016, includes a roadmap strategy that covers the provision of access to an increasing range of data sources, and in addition to analyzing "north to south" (external to internal) traffic flows there will be more focus on internal, across-the-business, "east to west" traffic flow analysis.

The availability of big data and analytical capabilities within SP Insight is likely to make the Arbor Networks platform more attractive to a wider audience, and there will be a particular focus on new and existing clients across the global service provider, cloud, and hosting communities. The true measure of success for the SP Insight product set will therefore be the levels of penetration achieved in these markets among existing and new customers.

Appendix

Further reading

SWOT Assessment: Arbor Networks Spectrum, IT0022-000697, (June 2016)

Arbor's Move to Address an Expanding DDoS Market, IT0022-000515 (November 2015)

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