McAfee and Citrix Partner to Make Virtual Desktop Security Simpler and More Scalable

SAN FRANCISCO » 5/12/2010 » Today at Citrix Synergy™ 2011 McAfee, Inc. (NYSE: MFE) and Citrix Systems (NASDAQ: CTXS) announced a strategic partnership and collaboration agreement to make virtual desktop security simpler and more scalable for large enterprise deployments. The collaboration between the two leaders in security and virtualization will enable Citrix XenDesktop® customers to extend management of desktop security to virtual environments using the McAfee® ePolicy Orchestrator® platform. The partnership is the direct result of growing customer demand for integrated security management in large-scale enterprise deployments of desktop virtualization. The combination is expected to address the need to provide granular endpoint security policies for each virtual desktop while also addressing scalability, performance and complexity challenges that arise from virtualization.

As part of the solution, Citrix plans to collaborate with McAfee to develop security solutions for VDI-based virtual desktops that centralize all virus scanning and virus signature file updates, off-loading the processing intensive actions from the individual VMs. This goal of this solution is to enhance the security and scalability of virtual desktop deployments by reducing CPU, memory and storage requirements, and to simplify desktop security and lifecycle management. The results of the collaboration are planned for release late in the second half of 2010 and will be designed to secure XenDesktop deployments on any of the three leading hypervisors - Citrix XenServer®, Microsoft Hyper-V or VMware ESX.

“Leveraging traditional security practices such as in-guest virus scans to secure virtualized workloads results in an excessive performance tax that reduces consolidation densities while inflating capital and operational expenses,” said Chris Wolf, senior analyst, Burton Group (recently acquired by Gartner, Inc). “The technical nuances of the virtual desktop such as shared OS images make legacy endpoint security solutions impractical. Instead, open solutions that intelligently leverage hypervisor and guest-level resources as needed, while providing required insight into complex shared virtual infrastructures, are best positioned for long term success.”

In addition, McAfee and Citrix are collaborating to develop hypervisor-native detection capabilities into Citrix XenClient™ and Citrix XenServer, that will deliver a quantum leap forward in endpoint security. The hypervisor will play a first-class role in protecting and detecting security policy violations for virtual machines. These industry-first capabilities for hypervisor-native detection will also be contributed to Xen.org, together with an open security API. The McAfee® Management for Optimized Virtual Environments (MOVE) platform will take advantage of these enhanced hypervisor-native capabilities making it easier to provide security by performing run-time checks on the integrity of each virtual machine. The collaboration will enable the Xen ecosystem broadly, including Xen-based clouds, to offer endpoint security services as a native property of the virtual infrastructure.

“Customers are looking for simpler, scalable security as they expand their virtual desktop deployments across the enterprise. With this partnership, customers will benefit from complete integration of best in class security capabilities from McAfee and the most comprehensive market-leading desktop virtualization solution with XenDesktop. Combined with the new hypervisor-native integration in XenClient and XenServer, we are working to raise the bar in virtual desktop security industry-wide,” said Raj Dhingra, group vice president and general manager of the XenDesktop product group at Citrix. “Together, we are delivering security solutions to make virtual desktop management simpler, more scalable and lower cost to ensure mainstream adoption of desktop virtualization.”

“The McAfee and Citrix partnership addresses the real-life scenarios of unexpected resource utilization due to on-access scanning of files when checking for malware,” said Bryan Barney, executive vice president of product operations. “Enterprises should no longer need to choose between providing basic endpoint protection over density of virtual desktops. McAfee and Citrix are working to provide enterprises with greater operational efficiencies and cost-saving management and innovation.”

Technology demonstrations will be available in the McAfee booth at Citrix Synergy 2010.

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