

IP NETWORKS

Gateway handles thorny problems with addressing

BY ELLEN MESSMER

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Start-up Network Translation, Inc. next week will begin shipping an IP network address translator that gives corporate networks direct access to the Internet even when their private addressing schemes are invalid for Internet use.

Called the Private Internet Exchange, the gateway sits between a firm's internal IP network and the public Internet, converting the sender's IP packet headers into a format acceptable for delivery over the Internet.

Network Translation's product spares companies the job of converting their entire internal routing and addressing schemes simply to give corporate users the ability to telnet, E-mail, or use Mosaic or file transfer on the Internet.

At companies with internal TCP/IP backbone networks, systems administrators can assign computer network addresses for users in any way they please if data will be shared only within the organization.

But for use on the public Internet, as well, the addresses must follow the numbering scheme issued to each organization by the Internet's registration authority, the Network Information Center (NIC) in Herndon, Va.

Exploding use of the Internet has led to a growing shortage of available addresses from the NIC, compelling the center to demand engineering plans from companies to ascertain real need and prevent speculative hoarding of addresses.

After putting in TCP/IP nets, firms are belatedly coming to the conclusion that they would like valid Internet addresses without having to change computer software or applying to the

NIC — a procedure now fraught with months of delay.

Network Translation's Private Internet Exchange gateway converts nonvalid IP addresses into valid ones. And it can also be set up to act as an Internet fire wall, letting corporate users out but restricting outsiders from getting in.

"This is the first product to do this," said analyst Noel Johnston at consultancy Axis international, Inc. in San Francisco. "There are existing products that act as fire walls, but the Private Internet Exchange is the first that con-

verts private IP addresses to public ones."

KLA Instruments, Inc., a San Jose, Calif.-based semiconductor test equipment manufacturer, has been beta-testing the product on its internal IP net. "It's worked flawlessly," said Alan Helbush, systems administra-

tor at the firm.

The Private Internet Exchange is also a useful security mechanism in keeping private IP addresses from the eyes of the outside world, noted John Mayes, Network Translation's founder and president. "Companies such as Bank of America, which has a huge IP network, are looking at this for the sake of duplicate addresses. They don't want to display internal IP addresses to the Internet."

The Private Internet Exchange could support up to three T-1 lines' worth of data without measurable delay in processing IP packets, Mayes said. The translator works according to Internet standard RFC 1597.

The product is available now, with pricing starting at \$7,995.

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