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## FatPipe Enters Europe with Bandwidth Aggregation

News

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FatPipe Networks Inc, a developer of router clustering technology, is expanding into the European market, touting its ability to aggregate bandwidth from the kind of connections commonly found in SMEs and multiplex VPNs across up to three router lines.

The Salt Lake City, Utah-based company, which is still privately held, started out in 1995 offering load-balancing on outbound WAN traffic, aggregating traffic from ADSL connections and leased lines to create a "virtual fatpipe," yet enabling administrators to set policies of port priority for outbound traffic, or assign a particular application to each port for predictable QoS.

This aggregation capability is otherwise achievable only in more high-end environments using Border Gateway Protocol (BGP) programming on enterprise-class routers, using T1/E1 connections or higher. BGP is not only a more expensive proposition, said Jesse Carillo, FatPipe's international franchise manager, but it perforce involves a company's internet provider.

"You have to get an errand number from the ISP to do it," he explained. The FatPipe technology, by contrast, is appropriate for the SME space, and can be implemented exclusively by the customer.

Other shortcomings of BGP are that "it is not true load balancing, in that it simply pumps half the traffic down one line and half down the other, and it has no automatic failover, relying instead on manual intervention," said Carillo.

FatPipe enhanced its offering significantly in 1999. Firstly, it added the ability to load-balance inbound WAN traffic. Then, in addition to clear text traffic, it launched the capability of handling encrypted data.

The Warp box that does router clustering for unencrypted environments can now, through a software download, be upgraded to the company's other flagship product, the MPVPN, which stands for Multiplexed VPN and offers an equivalent capability for both IPsec and SSL VPNs.

The company argues that the ability to load-balance VPN traffic, encrypted using standard algorithms or with FatPipe's proprietary MPsec, not only improves performance, but also layers on additional security, in that getting into one of the three lines over which the traffic is flowing will only give a hacker a third of the data being transmitted.

The technology is clearly more for the SME space: it maxes out at around 300Mbps right now, beyond which multiple boxes will be required. Even so, it is being used in the more sophisticated end of

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SME, by companies such as law firms and financial institutions:  
Commerzbank is a customer in the US.

As for pricing, the Warp version of the box has a list price of \$9,500 (9,110 euros). On the company's roadmap, said Carillo, are improvements to the equipment's point-to-point-over-Ethernet (PPoE) capability for communication between links, more diagnostics and better SNMP functionality for reporting.