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Sophos To Acquire Astaro In Network Security Push

By [Andrew R Hickey](#), CRN

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Sophos plans to acquire unified threat management and network security player Astaro in a move the companies say will give Sophos a more layered security play and beef up its network security capabilities.

The terms of the deal were not disclosed.

According to Sophos, acquiring privately held Wilmington, Mass.-based Astaro will help it meet the demands for more complete security protection in addition to its [endpoint security](#) and e-mail security prowess.

"The combination of Astaro's comprehensive portfolio of network security solutions alongside our endpoint, mobile and e-mail and Web threat and data protection capabilities will enable us to continue to deliver on our vision of providing complete security without complexity wherever the user and company data resides," said Sophos CEO Steve Munford in a statement.

The two companies said the acquisition will give channel partners a broader and differentiated range of security offerings and services that aren't readily available in the market today.

"Partners can deliver coordinated threat and data protection and policy from any endpoint to any network boundary with solutions that can be deployed in any way: software, virtual, appliance, via a cloud services platform and back-end security updates from Sophos Live Protection for realtime, high-performance protection for end users no matter where they are," the companies said in a statement.

The addition of strong network security also gives U.K.-based Sophos a stronger competitive posture against large rivals like McAfee, Symantec and others. The combination of Sophos and Astaro will result in complementary security portfolios to offer protection and policy between endpoint and network. Combining policy, security filtering and information known at the endpoint with the network gives Sophos the ability to increase security and visibility while integrating management and reporting, the companies said.

In addition, combined Sophos-Astaro products will offer pumped-up protection to meet complex threats and malware challenges from the Web, applications and social engineering vectors that require full visibility and coordination.

Sophos said the Astaro buy comes as companies struggle to protect users and IT infrastructure from new and complex threats that can be introduced through mobility, new applications, distributed networks and other mediums. The companies said the Sophos-Astaro acquisition will answer the need for better security coordination and effectiveness between users, applications and IT infrastructure.

The acquisition also comes as the market for multifunction security appliances explodes. According to data from IDC, the market for unified threat management reached \$2 billion globally in 2010 and is expected to have a compound annual growth rate of 13 percent through 2014. The security world is also reeling from a recent rash of [mobile security threats](#).

"Demand for network security solutions with more comprehensive and high-quality protection is accelerating fast, and yet companies are struggling with the complexity of multiple security solutions to serve these needs," Astaro CEO Jan Hichert said in a statement, adding the companies will work together to deliver comprehensive security solutions that apply consistently across the Web, applications and the network.

Astaro had \$56 million in billings and 30 percent year-over-year growth in 2010, making it the fourth largest dedicated unified threat management player. The company boasts more than 56,000 installations in more than 60 countries. It has 220 employees with a significant presence in Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

The acquisition by Sophos comes just months after [Astaro acquired CoSoSys](#), a Romanian endpoint security and data loss prevention startup.

And in May 2010, [Sophos agreed to sell the majority of its business to APAX Partners](#), a private equity investment firm, to the tune of \$380 million.

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