Gartner: IoT Requires Network Access Policy Change

Written by Marco Attard
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According to Gartner the number of Internet of Things (IoT) devices in use globally will reach 21 billion by 2010-- bringing about an opportunity in network policy updates handling such an onslaught.

"Having embraced a bring-your-own-device strategy, organizations must now get employee devices on the enterprise network and start addressing the 21bn IoT devices that we project will want access to the enterprise network," the analyst says. "Whether a video surveillance camera for a parking lot, a motion detector in a conference room or the HVAC for the entire building, the ability to identify, secure and isolate all IoT devices-- and in particular "headless" devices-- is more difficult to manage and secure.

Many IoT devices use the established enterprise network bandwidth, such as the 1.3Gbps of 802.11ac Wave 1 or 1.7Gbps of 802.11ac Wave 2. However organisations should work together with facilities management (FM) and business units (BU) to identify all devices and projects connected to enterprise infrastructure.

Once all devices hooked to the network are identified, organisations should create or modify network access policy in order to determine if and how these devices will be connected, as well as the roles governing such access. In addition I&O leaders should consider additional network best practices in order to define a connectivity policy. This is due to many devices not using 802.11 wireless protocols such as Bluetooth, ZigBee or Z-Wave, leading to interference.

Packet sniffers should be considered in order to check devices doing anything undesirable on the network, while virtual segments should allow network architects to separate IoT assets from other network traffic. Gartner says virtual segments will allow the prioritisation of traffic to differing segments. After all, security video traffic and normal application traffic may have higher priority than LED lighting.

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