



GTA has been producing its *GNAT Box* firewall for six years, and has now established itself as the producer of a high-quality usable product for the home and small business environment. But it is also receiving considerable coverage for its appliances, which have the software installed in flash memory in extremely well-crafted hardware.

The latest version of the software itself is still as simple yet secure as ever. Installation is very easy: *GNAT Box* incorporates its own operating system, making it platform-independent. This stateful-inspection firewall is just as easy to configure. One of the *GNAT Box*'s strengths is that it offers a default security policy the moment IP addresses are assigned and it starts running – no inbound access, unrestricted outbound access. The *GAdmin* application still provides an extremely easy-to-use GUI, whereby you define all the network objects prior to creating the rules and the actions to be followed if an alert occurs. Purely from a software point of view, *GNAT Box* is both incredibly simple to install and use, while offering very powerful protection.

Until recently, *GNAT Box* could be purchased as a flash memory plug-in for an

GNAT Box/RoBoX Firewall Appliance/GB-1000 Firewall Appliance



by Craig Hinton

Version: 3.2
Supplier: Global Technology Associates Inc
Price: £495 (*RoBoX*, 10 users); £2,295 (*GB-1000*)
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FOR The *GNAT Box* software continues to impress with excellent usability, and the *RoBoX* and *GB-1000* are just as impressive with their build quality and VPN capabilities out of the box.


AGAINST The *RoBoX* is not really enterprise level – but then again, it isn't really aimed at that market. [Ed note: The company points out that it has a 25-user licence, with the option of VPN.]

VERDICT Excellent value for money, the *GNAT Box* software has found a perfect home in the small, attractive form of the *RoBoX*, although the appliance probably isn't the ideal solution at the enterprise level given the limitations in the software – you'd be better off with the fully-featured *GB-1000*.

Features	★★★★★
Ease of use	★★★★★
Performance	★★★★★
Documentation	★★★★★
Support	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★
Overall Rating	★★★★★

Intel platform, or as the *GB-100/GB-1000* appliances, which offer three and four network interfaces in desktop or rack-mountable form respectively. The *GNAT Box* family has now been joined by the *RoBoX*, which has an incredibly small footprint: only 16cm by 16cm by 2.5cm. Build quality is extremely high; its metal casing gives it a robust feel that some desktop appliances lack, having sacrificed metal for plastic. But don't let its small size deceive you. It still manages three network interfaces: for the internal, external and DMZ networks. A 133MHz AMD SC520 processor, 64Mb RAM and 16Mb flash memory lurk inside.

The *RoBoX* isn't really aimed at the enterprise level, however. Perhaps GTA has decided that it doesn't want to overload the home/SME user with too much functionality, but it has limited the number of concurrent connections to 10,000, as well as capping a number of other factors. Although these limits are probably more than sufficient for the smaller business, they might become a hindrance at enterprise level.

It does, however, feature built-in VPN capability, which is provided by the very popular *SafeNet/Soft-PK* VPN client, that allows straightforward server-server and client-server VPN creation. It is also compatible with most IPsec clients. The latest version of *GNAT Box* does not disappoint. With simple installation and the easy-to-use traffic light system, it is a perfect firewall solution for anything from home to small business use, and installed in the *RoBoX* it is more than suitable for desktop use. However, for enterprise level protection, you would probably be better off with the larger *GB-1000* which is more suited to the larger network. 

The *GNAT Box* software continues to impress with excellent usability, and the *RoBoX* and *GB-1000* are just as impressive with their build quality and VPN capabilities out of the box.

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