

Datamation Announces 2008 Product of the Year Winners

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By James Maguire



After a flurry of heavy voting, our readers have selected their picks for this year's *Datamation* Product of the Year Awards. The winners represent the essential building blocks of IT infrastructure: Anti-Spam Software, Enterprise Servers, Network Management, and more.

In some categories, top honors were scored by the accepted industry heavyweight. The winners in, for instance, Handheld Device and Virtualization Software will surprise no one who follows these sectors. On the other hand, Office Productivity Software saw an upset, with a longtime favorite consigned to also-ran status. Voters are an unpredictable bunch.

Win or lose, though, simply being nominated was a plus; the 43 nominations came from readers, and vote totals showed that each product has loyal users. Of course it's the 10 winners who truly have bragging rights: *Datamation* readers are diverse group of IT professionals, with in-the-trenches knowledge of this gear, so garnering their vote is an honor that any tech company can be proud of.

To provide insight into the winners, over the next couple weeks we'll run profiles of each product. Check back for in-depth coverage.

The winners of the 2008 *Datamation* Product of the Year Awards are as follows:

Anti-Spam Software

Taking the prize in Anti-Spam Software – a category that grows more important every year – is [Ad-Aware 2007 Pro](#). Developed by Lavasoft, Ad-Aware offers advanced features for sophisticated computer users, from optimal control of scans to damage repair. Perhaps adding to its popularity, the Swedish-based Lavasoft simplified Ad-Aware's interface this past year.

The other nominees in Anti-Spam Software were Spam Assassin 3.2.3 (a past winner) and MX Logic Email Defense Service.

Business/IT Alignment

The Business/IT Alignment category is critical for many companies; getting these two key divisions in sync provides a huge competitive advantage. This year's winner – by a landslide – is [IBM's Innov8](#).

This Big Blue product has a touch of the sci-fi to it: it's an interactive, 3-D business simulator intended to close the divide between IT staff and business executives. In other words, it's...a videogame. I guarantee you that in all the decades that *Datamation* has done its Product of the Year awards, never has a videogame won. The times they are a-changin'. (Here's a [YouTube video](#) of Innov8.)

The other nominees were HP Automated Operations 1.0, Ecora Auditor Professional, CommVault Simpana 7.0 Software Suite, and Software AG webMethods Product Suite.

Enterprise Linux

While both Red Hat and Novell can lay claim to “preferred vendor” status in the corporate Linux market – it's a subject that Linux partisans argue about fiercely – this year [Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5](#) won the most votes. The Red Hat platform benefits from thousands of certified ISV applications, and, in a nod to the times, can be deployed in a standalone, virtual, or cloud format.

The runner-ups were Novell SUSE Linux Enterprise Real Time 10 and Canonical Ubuntu 7.10 Server Edition.

Enterprise Security

Enterprise security grows ever more challenging with each quarter, as headlines about spectacular data losses never run dry. Helping fight the tide of black hats -is category winner [Verdasys Digital Guardian 5](#). The platform bills itself as a complete solution: data loss prevention, governance, compliance, content protection and encryption. In theory, such an integrated security platform would have an advantage because its various parts were developed to work seamlessly as an organic whole. Apparently in this case the *Datamation* readers agree.

The other nominees were Code Green Networks, Data Domain DD580 Appliance, Kazeon Information Server IS1200-ECS, Bluesocket v6.1 software platform, and nuBridges Secure Transaction Manager.

Enterprise Server

Whether a server is the “best” server is, in truth, based on your company's individual needs and budgets. In the server world, with its myriad options and add-ons, one size definitely does not fit all. That said, [IBM p 570 Server](#) must fit plenty of needs; the box easily won the Enterprise Server category. IBM claims this workhorse doubles the speed of its predecessor without requiring a larger energy footprint.

The other nominees were all well-regarded boxes: the IBM System x3950 M2 Server, the HP MediaSmart Server, and the Dell PowerEdge 2970.

Handheld Device

There was a handheld gadget introduced last year that you might not have heard much about, the [Apple iPhone](#) (that is, you heard little about it if you lived in a

remote cave in the Upper Andes). Surprising no one, the iPhone definitively won this category (though the Blackberry Curve also ran strongly). The iPhone, you'll remember, had buyers lined up at dawn to get their hands on it.

In addition to the Blackberry Curve, the other nominees were the Nokia n810, Sprint Mogul, Motorola Q9h Global, and Palm Treo 755p.

Network and Systems Management

Interestingly, voting was particularly tight in this category, with most of the competitors' vote totals landing within a handful of each other. Eking out a win is [Dataflux Accelerator](#), which provides IT managers with the tools to diagnose and manage data flow. It "scores" the quality of customer data, and establishes checks on data flow to ensure that information is flowing as expected. The software helps determine ROI – it helps monitor the results of expenditures – which of course is what the bottom line is all about.

The runner-ups were matrix42 Empirum 2008, Hyperic HQ 3.1, Intelliden Dynamic Resource Provisioning Solution, Express Metrix Express Software Manager 8.0, and Silver Peak 2.0.

Office Productivity Software

When it comes to total numbers of users, there's no question that Microsoft Office is the 800-pound gorilla of this category. The deeply entrenched Office makes the corporate world go 'round. Given Office's status, it's a major eyebrow raiser that this category was won by relative newcomer [IBM Lotus Symphony](#). Perhaps it's because Big Blue's product is free (that always helps), or because IBM is itself such an established vendor. Whatever the case, consider this vote as a huge upset.

Besides Office, the other nominees were OpenOffice 2.3.1 and Thinkfree Office.

Virtualization Software

Perhaps no other IT market is evolving as quickly as virtualization. Research firm IDC [predicts](#) that total dollars spent on virtualization will double between now and 2011, growing to a tidy \$12 billion. At this point, *Datamation* readers view [VMware Server 2](#) as the top product. And the broader market seems to agree: one analyst recently forecast that VMware's profits will surge by 50 percent over the next year. But the virtualization market is a quarter-by-quarter horse race, rather than a staid place with entrenched players. Stay tuned.

Certainly, the other nominees, XenSource XenExpress OEM Edition, and Parallels (formerly SWSoft) Open Platform, are actively jockeying for position.

Wireless Software

For most of 2007, [Cognos 8 Go! Mobile](#) software supported only Blackberry units. At the end of last year, Cognos upgraded its wireless business intelligence software – which delivers business reports to on-the-go staffers – to support handhelds that run Windows Mobile OS. Naturally, this expanded the company's user base, and likely helped Cognos 8 Go! Mobile win the Wireless Software category.

The other nominees were iPass Mobility Management package and MontaVista Mobilinux Version 5.

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