KerioControl

Leading Hi-Fi design and manufacturing company bolsters cybersecurity with GFI KerioControl

CHORD

Chord Electronics Ltd.

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ⓘ Introduction

Founded in 1989, Chord Electronics is a UK-based company that designs and manufactures high-end Hi-Fi audio products for both consumer and professional use. Chord produces a wide range of products from power amplifiers to integrated amplifiers, preamplifiers, digital-to-audio converters (DACs), and portable music streamers. Chord is one of the top companies in the global Hi-Fi market sector, selling directly to retail stores in the UK and through distributors worldwide.

Matt Bartlett is an expert on high-quality audio products. As Managing Director of Chord Electronics, a company with 30 employees most of whom work at their UK-based manufacturing site in Kent, Matt has had a long and rewarding experience working at the company. "I started with Chord Electronics Ltd when I was 15 years old," says Matt. "It was the perfect job for me as I have always loved electronics. Subsequently, I went to university to get my Electronics Engineering degree and became a Chartered Engineer. I have now been with Chord for thirty years, and my view of our products has never changed— it has always been my goal to give our customers the best musical experience that any piece of electronics can give them along with the best service and support."

And as audiophiles and sound engineers worldwide can readily attest, Chord does produce some of the best audio equipment available. Selling their line of products business-to-business (B2B) to over 200 separate businesses that cover most of the globe, Chord is one of the high-profile players in the home and professional audio marketplace. And while this provides them with a significant market advantage, such visibility also comes with a price: it can make you a target.

📈 Facing twin challenges

Online threats intensified considerably in the last few years, especially since the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. According to a report from the Anti-Phishing Working Group (APWG), phishing attacks doubled in one year. The International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) also stated that cybercriminals continue to adapt to both business and social changes, often camouflaging their activities under the guise of legitimate operations.

Parallel to these security concerns is the increasing adoption of remote work models. Driven by a shift in global work practices, businesses have rapidly transitioned their workforce to operate remotely. This new dynamic brings an added layer of complexity to maintaining cybersecurity.

With the additional pressures of keeping your business safe from cyber threats while enabling employees to work securely from home, Small- and mid-sized businesses (SMBs) need solutions that are easy to implement, simple to use, and affordable.

[1] See https://apwg.org/trendsreports/ for details of the report.

💡 The right solution

Matt confirms that Chord has faced these problems. The twin challenges of dealing with an escalating cyberthreat landscape and being suddenly forced to support a remote workforce would normally have been tough for a small company like Chord. Fortunately, they had been working for years with a trusted partner providing premium IT solutions and services to SMBs, Invicta Linux. One of GFI's UK-based partners, Invicta equipped Chord with GFI KerioControl, which helped them safely ride out much of the stress brought about by the pandemic in 2020.

"Previously, we were using Microsoft Small Business Server (SBS) with only simple security," says Matt. "The addition of a GFI KerioControl Unified Threat Management (UTM) firewall appliance helped us reinforce our security and the speed of our network."

Designed for businesses of all sizes, GFI KerioControl helps protect your business from viruses, malware, and various kinds of malicious activity that can signal attempts by malicious actors to breach your network defenses. GFI KerioControl also includes a next-generation firewall and router, world-class intrusion detection and prevention (IPS) functionality, and easy-to-use web content and application filtering to protect your network and improve user productivity.

And while the need for robust cybersecurity protection has heightened because of the global events in recent years, there's another reason why Chord worries about being attacked. It's their visibility as a top company in high-end audio products. "GFI KerioControl includes perimeter anti-virus and threat prevention," says Matt, "and these have risen since our profile has increased."

A particularly valuable feature of GFI KerioControl, which has gained significance in the evolving work landscape, is its built-in virtual private network (VPN) capabilities. By utilizing these capabilities your business can create a secure pipe between the corporate network and employees working from home. Remote workers only need to download and install the GFI KerioControl VPN client on their devices. They can then use the client to connect to the secure access point which is hosted on the GFI KerioControl appliance that sits on the perimeter of your corporate network.

Chord saw these capabilities as a lifesaver when their employees suddenly found themselves having to work from home. As Chord contemplates future expansion, the extended VPN capabilities of GFI KerioControl, such as secure server-to-server connections with remote offices, will become increasingly vital. This positions GFI KerioControl as a key tool to mitigate cybersecurity risks when Chord expands to new locations.

</> Ease of use and deployment

Small businesses generally lack in-house expertise and resources to properly install, configure, manage, and monitor solutions that have the complexity associated with modern IT. Frequently, such businesses partner with managed service providers who can assist in dealing with these complexities or manage the solution entirely. This is the case with Chord, which let its trusted GFI partner Invicta Linux handle the difficult parts of integrating GFI KerioControl with their network.

Invicta Linux does most of the heavy lifting concerning the configuration, management, and monitoring of Chord's GFI KerioControl appliance. "We predominantly just leave GFI KerioControl to do its job in the background without needing much user input," says Matt, "which is exactly as it should be." Designed to be transparent to end-users, GFI KerioControl's threat handling and VPN functionality is 100% hassle-free once set up and configured on your network. And, while the product's intuitive web-based interface is mainly designed for administration, having access to it on Matt's side has made visible the recent rise in cyberattacks Chord has been experiencing. "Threats are visible via the web interface," says Matt, who also points out that knowing this from his side "makes working with Invicta Linux on potential issues very easy."
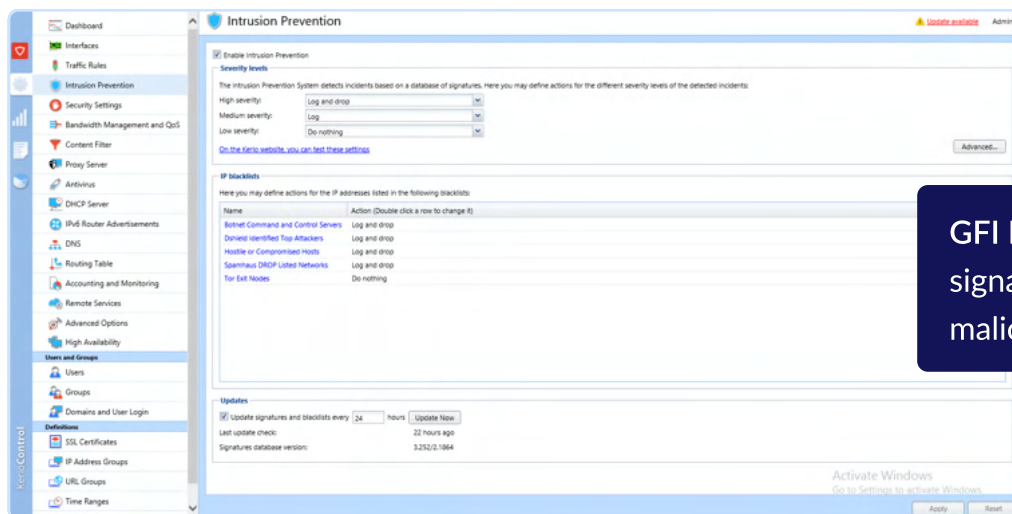
GFI KerioControl uses a signature database to detect malicious activity.

ⓢ Benefits and costs

The biggest benefit that technology can bring to a business is a sense of security and stability. Having GFI KerioControl on their network has accomplished this in the case of Chord Electronics. "I have more peace of mind and control than I had beforehand," says Matt, "The monitoring done by Invicta Linux ensures that the firewall in GFI KerioControl is up to date and as effective as possible". Configuring policies for inbound and outbound traffic to thwart new threats requires technical expertise that many SMBs can't afford to learn, so having a reliable partner to manage their cybersecurity is a godsend.

Naturally, smaller businesses often worry about the cost when implementing new technology. Because of budgetary constraints, SMBs often compare different offerings before choosing the one to go with. With Chord, however, this wasn't the case. According to Matt: "We didn't consider any alternatives. GFI KerioControl gave us the functionality we needed for an acceptable price."

Has the decision paid off? "It's difficult to accurately quantify the return on investment (ROI)," explains Matt. "But without GFI KerioControl (and also GFI KerioConnect), the last twelve months of working from home would have been much harder, meaning a huge financial impact on our business."

Partner with the best

One of many simple yet powerful software solutions from GFI, KerioControl is the ideal choice for small or mid-sized business that wants to safeguard the integrity of their network against cyberattacks. Industry-leading customers like Chord Electronics can attest to the product's effectiveness as they rely on it for day-to-day protection against viruses, malware, and other threats in our connected world. Matt Bartlett recommends GFI KerioControl as an "all-encompassing solution for small businesses to ensure both security and connectivity with employees."

GFI KerioControl stands out with its robust, user-friendly features and versatile deployment choices. Whether you opt for a software appliance on your own hardware, a virtual appliance on VMware or Hyper-V, or a dedicated hardware appliance, it seamlessly integrates into your existing IT infrastructure. Designed for businesses of all sizes, GFI KerioControl effectively detects threats, blocks viruses, and secures VPN connections, catering to the demands of today's remote work environments.

With flexible licensing options, GFI KerioControl is fully supported by GFI and available through their worldwide network of distributors and partners. Try GFI KerioControl today and sleep soundly knowing your business has the best protection available.

For more information visit gfi.com.