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IT chiefs call for security rethink

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Two of the UK's top IT directors are to call on suppliers to radically change the way IT security is implemented.

Paul Simmonds, global information security director at chemical firm ICI, and David Lacey, head of information security and governance at Royal Mail, will demand that the industry moves beyond the limitations of network perimeter security, when they speak at next week's RSA 2003 security conference in Amsterdam.

Simmonds said IT directors at other FTSE 100 companies are backing their call.

Network perimeter security, based on firewall and anti-virus technology, has become the de facto way to secure corporate networks, but Simmonds and Lacey believe the technique cannot cope with businesses' need to connect clients and partners quickly and cost-effectively.

"The situation today is that maintaining perimeter-based security is expensive and it is not sustainable," Simmonds said. "We need a more strategic approach to define tools and standards."

Simmonds said users needed to build borderless global networks where security was built into the network, rather than just at the interface between the internal network and the outside world. This technique, known as de-perimeterisation, said Simmonds, "promises to reduce cost and aid business".

However, for this to work, he said firms would have to move all their network applications onto secure protocols, which would break the application software used by businesses.