

## Cisco - The Realm

Source: Effies (North America), Bronze, North America Effies 2010

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Without "new news" or product releases, Cisco wanted to reignite the conversation around their suite of security systems with IT Managers. So we asked a question: What if the best security solutions in the world were more than just products? The answer: The Realm: an animated graphic novel depicting a world where Cisco security and digital threats come alive. From the first Botnet attack to the final virus showdown, defenders fight to protect the citizens of The Realm, using their security powers to defeat a threat conspiracy of epic proportions.

Category: **Computer Hardware**

Brand/Client: **Cisco**

Primary Agency: **Ogilvy & Mather**

Media Agency: **NEO@Ogilvy**

## STRATEGIC CHALLENGE

In modern business, security challenges are everywhere. The tools that deliver unprecedented workforce collaboration and productivity on the network also create new access points to personal and company information. Breaching security systems is a twisted game for some and often results in serious business outages and/or data exposure. Users must have confidence that their information and data can travel safely across the network in order for the system to flourish.

As the leading provider of network technology that forms the backbone of the network, Cisco Systems is uniquely qualified to provide products and services that ensure a secure experience. In fact, Cisco security systems are **built into** their routers and switches, creating a secure network from the ground up. Coupled with an array of email, firewall and endpoint protection products, Cisco has created a true **category-of-one** offering.

The challenge? Although Cisco was widely known as a provider of network technology, they were not always top of mind in the security arena. Awareness of the total product suite was low. So low, in fact, IT Managers would often buy Cisco products with integrated security measures and then proceed to “bolt on” security appliances from competitors!

Cisco needed to remind IT Managers that they were not just in the security business, but that they provided **best-in-breed products and solutions**. They also needed to restart the dialogue with the technology press and IT bloggers, both key influencers of IT Managers. All of this needed to happen without “new news,” a new product release or a big-time media budget.

## OBJECTIVES

Simply stated, Cisco wanted to raise awareness of and stimulate conversation around their suite of security products.

Given the long lead time associated with enterprise-level IT purchases, Cisco created a set of Key Performance Indicators designed to effectively gauge a perception/awareness shift among IT Managers in the short term.

1. **Market Awareness and Buzz** – measured by number and quality of media mentions, blog posts and Twitter posts. No defined numeric goal.
2. **Digital Media Response** – measured by banner click-through rates. Goal of .15 or better (Cisco average for similar campaigns).
3. **Microsite Web Traffic** – measured by total visitors to the microsite and time spent on site. Goal of 50K visitors (estimate based on communication plan) and 13 minute time on site.
4. **Event Marketing Response** – measured by lead generation. Goal of generating 700 leads at the RSA conference; deliver a lower Cost Per Lead than at the 2008 conference (\$771).

## THE BIG IDEA

If Cisco products could speak for themselves, what would they say?

IT Managers are bombarded daily with very traditional product-feature-benefit marketing efforts for an array of security products. This work places a heavy emphasis on “The Box,” the actual piece of equipment, and the technical specifications of the piece.

Cisco needed to break the mold, find a new way to tell their story and deliver it in new places.

We started with MRI data runs, but felt we needed to go to go further. To truly find key target insights, we went directly to the source: the designers of the security solutions themselves. Through a series of one-on-one interviews, we discovered something delightful. Individuals in the security business believe they are in a daily battle between good and evil. As **bad guys** find new ways to breach the network, the **good guys** write code and build products to stop them. Although they were too humble to say it, in many ways these developers are heroes

defending the populace from those with the desire to do harm.

We also knew that comic book culture was a mainstay of our IT Managers, consistently indexing at 250+ in MRI. But there was larger movement afoot. From the *X-Men* to *Batman* to *The Hulk*, classic comics were taking center stage in popular culture. How else can you explain over 100,000 people flocking to Comic-Con, the annual comic book festival, every year?

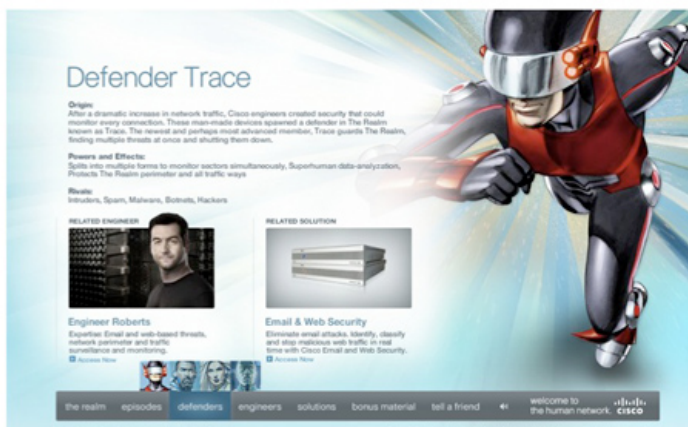
[Source: MRI Data run, pulled 10.03.08]

It was against this backdrop that we set out to answer one question: ***What if the best security solutions in the world were more than just products?*** Our answer: *The Realm*— an animated graphic novel depicting a world where Cisco security and digital threats come to life, designed to engage and entertain IT Managers. The security story unfolded in an exclusive online saga that spanned four episodes. From the first Botnet attack to the final virus showdown, defenders fight to protect the citizens of The Realm, using their security powers to defeat a threat conspiracy of epic proportions.

## BRINGING THE IDEA TO LIFE



The Realm  
Defender Page



To ensure that a Cisco animated comic would not be spurned by the target audience, it had to be authentic. We commissioned Mike Mayhew, a world-famous illustrator known for his work featured in DC and Marvel comics. Together, we created an authentic world that could be accepted by not just our target, but also by avid comic

fans. All illustrations are Mahew originals and wholly owned by Cisco.

We wanted to ensure that we were not creating superheroes just for the sake of flexing our creative muscle. Instead, each defender derived his or her power from the Cisco product(s) each represented. We narrowed Cisco's expansive suite of products down to four main solutions, personifying them as the defenders of The Realm. An overview:

### **Trace: Email Security**

The newest and perhaps most advanced member, Trace guards The Realm, finding multiple threats at once and shutting them down.

### **Wall: Firewall Security**

Part human knowledge, part firewall, Wall has extrasensory perception and can identify, target and remove physical and web attackers who try to enter the city limits of The Realm.

### **Vixa: Endpoint Protection**

Armed with the powers to protect endpoints within The Realm, Vixa fights to ensure the safety of all citizens connected to the network.

### **Jux: Threat Management**

Jux is the leader of the defenders in The Realm. Using his connection to the SensorBase, he is able to keep an ever-watchful eye on threats, protecting the network and keeping The Realm safe. Each episode of *The Realm* was told in first person by the defender who was the primary focus of the storyline, thereby highlighting each Cisco security solution area.

All four episodes were housed in a microsite that immersed the user in Cisco security. Users could watch episodes, find bios of the defenders and research the solution area they represent. Those IT Managers looking for a deeper dive could link directly into the product pages of [Cisco.com](https://www.cisco.com) for tech specs and more. We continued to leverage the popularity of Mike Mayhew with a bonus materials page; security fanatics could download defender wallpapers, ring tones and avatars. Much like a TV series, each episode was released exclusively on the microsite one by one over a period of eight weeks.

In order to maximize reach with limited media dollars, we paired a highly targeted online buy with social media channels, harnessed Cisco's organic site traffic and leveraged existing security events.

**Online Media:** Simple flash banner units and rich media units housing a :15 teaser video were placed on sites that indexed highly with IT Managers such as Network World, SourceForge, CSO and TechRepublic. We also placed ads with Comic Book Resources, the leading source for comic book news, commentary and community.

**Social Media:** Cisco took the campaign further, posting to security Facebook and YouTube pages, tech blogs and Twitter feeds.

**Organic Traffic:** To capitalize on the massive organic visitor base of [Cisco.com](https://www.cisco.com), we created a series of homepage spotlights, highlighting each episode as it was released over an eight-week period.

**Events:** Cisco also extended *The Realm* to the RSA Conference, the leading event in the nation for IT security specialists. Cisco booth areas were themed with *The Realm* graphics, complete with seven-foot-tall light boxes

of each defender. Cisco also outfitted two defenders, Trace and Vixa, in real-life costumes. Each defender passed out *The Realm* trading cards, posters and T-shirts.

The Grand Finale? The fourth episode of *The Realm* debuted at the conference's media day, a PR event attended by more than 30 media outlets.

Regardless of the effort, the call to action was the same: to see all of the action unfold at [cisco.com/go/realm](http://cisco.com/go/realm).

## COMMUNICATIONS TOUCH POINTS

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>TV</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Spots</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Branded Content</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Sponsorship</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Product placement</li></ul>   | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Packaging</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Product Design</b></li><li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Cinema</b></li><li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Interactive</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Online Ads</li><li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Web site</li><li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Viral video</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Video skins/bugs</li><li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social Networking Sites</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Podcasts</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Gaming</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Phone</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Other</li></ul></li><li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>OOH</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Airport</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Transit</li><li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Billboard</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Place Based</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Other</li></ul></li><li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Trade Shows</b></li><li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Sponsorship</b></li></ul> | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Retail Experience</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> POP</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Video</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> In-Store Merchandizing</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Sales Promotion</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Retailtainment</li></ul>                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Radio</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Spots</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Merchandising</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Program/content</li></ul>   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Guerrilla</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Street Teams</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Tagging</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Wraps</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Buzz Marketing</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Ambient Media</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Sampling/Trial</li></ul> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Print</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Trade/Professional</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper - print</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper - digital</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Magazine - print</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Magazine - digital</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Print partnership</li></ul> |   | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Consumer Involvement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> WOM</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Consumer Generated</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Viral</li></ul>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Direct</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Mail</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Email</li></ul>  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Other</b>  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>PR</b>  |   |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Events</b>  |   |  |

## ADDITIONAL MARKETING COMPONENTS:

None

## REACH:

National

## TOTAL MEDIA EXPENDITURE:

Undisclosed

## RESULTS

Response to *The Realm* was immediate and dramatic, delivering positive results across every Key Performance Indicator:

1. **Market Awareness and Buzz:** *The Realm* generates 150 media mentions, highlighted by stories in the *Wall Street Journal* and *PRWeek*. Major IT Manager blogs, such as IT Knowledge Exchange and Global Knowledge, also pick up the story.

Even comic aficionados sing the praises of *The Realm*. [Crucialcomicbooks.com](http://Crucialcomicbooks.com) says *The Realm* will “put the major comics publishers under a touch of pressure” to keep up with the work of Cisco.

Twitter posts are also enthusiastic, with one fan raving, “Cisco's *REALM* is money really well spent on marketing” and another one declaring, “Not Kidding: Updating Facebook for my work & just became a fan of Trace, 1 of the Cisco Defenders, *The Realm*.”

[Source: Cisco & Agency internal PR data, gathered 03.02.09-04.26.09]

2. **Digital Media Response:** Core media activity delivers a strong 0.56% click-through rate, 5X the industry standard of .10% and over 3X the Cisco goal of .15%. The :15 video teaser is viewed over 300,000 times on sites like Google, YouTube and Vibrant Media.

[Source: Agency DART Tag Tracking Data, gathered 03.02.09-04.26.09]

3. **Microsite Web Traffic:** Over 80K visitors are driven to the site during the eight-week launch period, 60% better than the 50K goal. Nearly two-thirds of the site traffic is delivered through organic sources and social media. An astounding 64% of the visitors are new to [Cisco.com](http://Cisco.com).

The most impressive statistic by far is the time spent on the site, which starts at 12 minutes in week one and grows to an eye-popping 25 minutes by week eight, nearly double the [Cisco.com](http://Cisco.com) average.

[Source: Visual Sciences Tag Tracking Data, Cisco Web Analytics Data; gathered 03.02.09-04.26.09]

4. **Event Marketing Response:** Cisco hits the 700 lead mark, but does so at a cost per lead of \$285, cutting the year-over-year cost by more than 50%. The event effort earns Cisco a 2008 Sizzle Award from Exhibitor Online.

[Source: [Exhibitoronline.com](http://Exhibitoronline.com), Cisco Event Marketing Team Data; gathered at RSA from 04.20.09-4.24.09]

In perhaps the best result of all, Cisco has continued to invest in new content for *The Realm* based on the results to date. In the fall of 2009, Cisco launched *The Realm* Comic Creator, encouraging fanatics to create their own episode of *The Realm*.

Ultimately, *The Realm* has become more than a singular marketing effort, but rather the core identity for Cisco's security product suite.

### Anything else going on that might have helped drive results?

No other factors.

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