Understanding SASE: Taking security to the edge

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Living on the edge

More and more businesses are looking to improve security by living on the edge — the Secure Access Service Edge (SASE).

SASE is not a single tool — it is a way of integrating tools and taking them to where users are, at the edge. The concept was first given the name SASE by Gartner in 2019 and was defined as:

"...a new package of technologies including SD-WAN, SWG, CASB, ZTNA, and FWaaS as core abilities, with the ability to identify sensitive data or malware and the ability to decrypt content at line speed, with continuous monitoring of sessions for risk and trust levels."

SASE is the future of network security and access. Digital transformation, the distributed mobile workforce, the adoption of cloud services, and emerging edge computing platforms have changed how enterprises operate. Today's users expect to have access to corporate applications from anywhere and from any device. SASE makes this possible, and it makes it secure.

Changes in the market over the last 10 years have pushed network security options to evolve. In the past, it was common to have multiple devices and multiple solutions to handle different aspects of security. Those different tools — possibly from different vendors — required different management systems, which added another level of complexity. Now, with SASE, the key concept is that of a platform. You don't have to use all the components. You can, for example, have a simple Firewall as a Service. And when you need remote access with Zero Trust Network Access (ZTNA), you simply add a subscription to this service, enabling the additional functionality.

The core of all of this is that you have it in one cloud management platform. Instead of having to learn multiple management platforms and structures, you have a single platform with an easier learning curve for IT administrators. And with a lot of automation included, you don't need to spend time on small, time-consuming tasks manually. Instead, you have templates that provide configuration out-of-the-box which helps to improve efficiency.

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The building blocks of SASE

The basic makeup of a SASE platform combines networking with security. This will include SD-WAN (software-defined wide area network) and security components. Those security components will include:

FWaaS

Firewall as a Service, which eliminates the need for a firewall appliance on premises, instead running it in the cloud.

ZTNA

Zero Trust Network Access, which addresses the need for remote access, enabling employees to work from anywhere. People who work from home can have the same secure access to corporate resources as those working in the office. ZTNA eliminates the limitations and heavy resource requirements of VPNs, boosting performance and cutting costs.

CASB

Cloud Access Security Broker, which ensures secure access to workloads and data hosted in the cloud.

SWG

Secure Web Gateway, which provides web security and secure internet browsing, protecting users from malicious websites and downloads.

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SASE is good for business as well as security

Businesses are constantly striving to get the most benefit out of every dollar, pound, euro, or yen they spend. And that is one reason why SASE has been increasing in popularity. It's not just a way of bolstering security — it comes with clear cost benefits as well.

Probably the most obvious benefit of SASE is the elimination of the capital expenditure (capex) required to acquire and install multiple devices to run networking and security functions on-premises. The operating expenses (opex) required to maintain and administer a suite of devices is also eliminated. Staff can be freed from such chores to pursue higher-value work.

With the "as-a-service" model of SASE, a regular, predictable service fee replaces capex and can, in many cases, reduce opex — because cloud services can be optimized to provide just the level of service required.

SASE also reduces complexity, because the platform can be managed from one single pane of glass, rather than requiring users to interact with multiple platforms. Working with a single vendor makes it easy to get answers and eliminates potential software or hardware conflicts. This is not only easier to manage, but can provide better insight into the network health and security status of your business.

Using SASE also ensures that your protection remains up to date. Unlike dedicated devices that need constant patching and eventually age out of viability, a cloud-based SASE solution can receive constant updates. This allows your SASE solution to respond to the constantly changing threat landscape. It's even possible to implement a hybrid or on-premises solution from Barracuda, if needed, and still receive the benefits of our expertise.

Implementing SASE the right way

Undertaking any IT change comes with challenges, and migrating to a SASE architecture is no different. As with any other project, you should first start with a survey of the current state of your network and security. After that is complete, ask yourself how it could be better, what changes you need to make, and what tools to use. If you need help, contact us at Barracuda and we'd be glad to discuss your options.

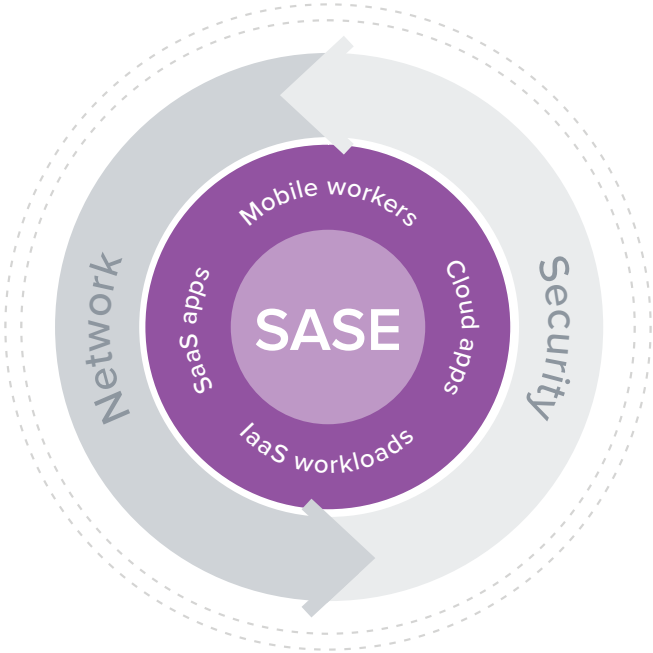
The actual transition process to a SASE platform is usually quite straightforward. You'll want to consult with your vendor and set timelines and milestones. This is useful both to prepare those in your organization and to track the progress of the migration.

Often the biggest challenge in transitioning to a SASE solution is change management within the organization. The actual training of staff is made simple by the clean, integrated nature of the platform, but adjusting to the new approach can take some time. It's important to explain to users that ZTNA best practice requires that users have only the access they need to do their jobs. For users that have had elevated levels of permissions that go beyond what they need, this tightening of access can cause some discontent. Having a thorough discussion around what is changing and why it is for the best should help.

Barracuda gives you the edge for SASE

The real strength of SASE comes precisely from the fact that it is a concept — a way to approach security — rather than a specific device or product. The adaptability of SASE means that it can grow to add new features and services as needed. It also means that it can grow with your business.

As a leader in security, Barracuda has built a SASE platform that gives you the flexibility you need with the security you demand. If you'd like to know about SASE, we'd be happy to discuss how it can work for you. Barracuda SecureEdge makes enterprise-grade SASE available to your business. Contact us to try it for free.



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Learn more

Barracuda's cloud-first SASE platform will transform your business.

Barracuda SecureEdge is a SASE platform that cuts complexity and provides anytime/anywhere security and access to data and applications hosted anywhere. SecureEdge is affordable, easy to deploy, and easy to manage.

Barracuda's cloud-first SASE platform enables businesses to control access to data from any device, anytime, anywhere, and allows security inspection and policy enforcement in the cloud, at the branch, or on the device. Barracuda SecureEdge delivers enterprise-grade security including Zero Trust Network Access (ZTNA), Firewall-as-a-Service, web security, and fully integrated office connectivity with Secure SD-WAN.

Visit the website

Try SecureEdge for free

Try our free SecureEdge configuration tool

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About Barracuda

At Barracuda we strive to make the world a safer place. We believe every business deserves access to cloud-first, enterprise-grade security solutions that are easy to buy, deploy, and use. We protect email, networks, data, and applications with innovative solutions that grow and adapt with our customers' journey. More than 200,000 organizations worldwide trust Barracuda to protect them — in ways they may not even know they are at risk — so they can focus on taking their business to the next level. For more information, visit barracuda.com.