

# SmallNetBuilder Web - Build an IDS Firewall - PFSense

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Hear that sound? That is someone rattling your doorknob. If they are able to break in, they will ransack your home, rifle through your private papers, correspondence, bank statements, photos, and if lucky they'll find your club memberships and credit cards - your identity. They may even plant listening devices. If you lived in a bad neighborhood, you'd put in high quality locks and maybe an alarm system. The problem is, on the net, everywhere is a bad neighborhood.

What stands between you and this happening on the internet is generally your router, which is designed more as a doorway than a lock. Consumer grade firewalls, either software or hardware, can act as a lock or gatekeeper. But to truly turn back the faceless attacks (even if they would just find pictures of your kids), you need a dynamic firewall with intrusion detection; the kind of 1U firewall server appliances usually found only in corporate data centers (read: expensive). Devices that generally start at about \$3K; a Cisco PIX firewall starts at nine.

We'll show you how you can put together your own firewall/router with all of the capabilities of high-end gear using open source software and inexpensive components. There are a significant number of open source distributions available for homebrew router/firewall builds. We chose [pfSense](#) for its outstanding built-in functionality, active support forums, first class documentation and overall maturity. Most significantly, beyond rich routing functionality, pfSense offers firewall and intrusion detection/prevention well beyond that of the mere mortal router.

## Firewall vs. Intrusion Detection/Prevention

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