

F5 Networks releases BIG-IP v10 with an emphasis on agility, dynamism and efficiency

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Event summary

- As F5 Networks introduces BIG IP v10, it claims to help create a 'dynamic infrastructure' consisting of adaptive infrastructural elements, new management capabilities and enhanced efficiency.
- F5 aims to increase customers' agility by moving from network-centricity to application-centricity; from a static datacenter model to a dynamic one that supports cloud computing and federated resources; and from isolated silos to multi-tenant settings.
- The new BIG-IP 8900 combines Local Traffic Manager, Application Security Manager and WebAccelerator in a single enclosure that supports on-demand provisioning, denial of service protection and brute force attack protection.

The 451 take

F5 tends to introduce large spurts of innovation at fairly lengthy intervals. The v10 innovations are novel and pragmatic. Competitors are typically slow to match new F5 features. It takes an effort to fully understand all of the elements of v10, but it's clearly a significant development in a sector that has shown signs of maturity for the last couple of years.

Details

Creating a more dynamic IT infrastructure sounds like a marketing slogan, but for **F5 Networks** this notion is a theme that is implemented in the new v10 of BIG-IP, the F5 datacenter communications accelerator (DCCA) products. The first element of dynamic infrastructure is context awareness. This concept contains the deployment environment of applications – access media, datacenter, branch location or transport type. It also includes users, their location and their access devices – everything from smartphones to desktop computers. The new version also includes network conditions such as latency, congestion or other impediments. With context awareness, it's easy to apply policies that optimize application delivery.

Application delivery can also be enhanced by two new features. Symmetric adaptive compression operates between any two BIG-IP appliances, providing the data reduction, optimization and acceleration found in WAN traffic optimization products. The iSessions capability operates between Local Traffic Manager modules, optimizing, encrypting and

optionally tunneling traffic. It improves transfer rates, reduces bandwidth consumption and offloads applications to better utilize WAN capacity.

V10 also has features for increasing efficiency. A new dashboard displays performance details on key components at definable time scales. Resource Provisioning supports flexible assignment of CPU and memory. Remote Authentication supports directory and other authentication systems for rapid deployment and fast failover.

Application Templates simplify the creation of profiles and policies for SharePoint 2007 and Exchange Web Access 2007, **VMware** VDI, **Oracle** Application Server 10g and **SAP** ERT. F5 claims setup time can be cut from multiple hours to a few minutes. Route Domains can create routing hierarchies to enable multi-tenanting, which is a key feature for managed service providers that must keep customer accounts separate without losing the ability to aggregate account information.

Competitive landscape

F5 is most likely the market share leader in the DCCA sector for both large enterprises and large consumer facilities. **Citrix** is also an important player in these settings. **Cisco** has expended a great deal of effort trying to get a first- or second-place position, but it probably isn't there yet. **Array Networks**, **Crescendo Networks**, **A10 Networks**, **Streamcore**, **Stampede Technologies** and **Zeus Technology** are the midmarket contenders. **Coyote Point Systems**, **Kemp Technologies** and **Barracuda Networks** have aggressively priced products aimed primarily at SMEs.

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