MICROSOFT APPLICATION CENTER

F5 iControl Enables Microsoft Application Center To Provide Seamless Content Distribution and Application Updates with Uninterrupted Service for High Availability, Security, and Performance

Executive Summary

As enterprises search for better, more cost-effective ways to manage their networks, industry leaders Microsoft® and F5 Networks are creating comprehensive answers. This joint solution not only can manage and direct increasingly complex applications, but can interact with the network, making decisions based on pre-configured parameters, without manual intervention. With this highly available, extremely secure solution in place, enterprises can expect increased ROI from their Web applications.

Microsoft is using F5 Networks' iControl® interface to enable the web servers and applications within Microsoft Application Center 2000 to seamlessly integrate and communicate with each other. With Application Center 2000 and F5 Networks' BIG-IP® product, Web applications built on Microsoft Windows 2000 can achieve mission-critical availability (99.999% uptime) through software scaling, while reducing operational complexity and costs. With iControl, Application Center is able to use the BIG-IP product to load balance traffic across available clusters and also distribute new applications and content updates without interrupting service.

Challenge

Taking systems offline to update data or distribute new applications is a manual process that absorbs valuable IT department resources. There are also possible performance impacts associated with the lost server capacity while the system is offline.

Solution

With F5 Networks' BIG-IP application traffic manager and the iControl interface, Application Center is able to use the BIG-IP solution to provide security, high availability, and automatically distribute new applications and content updates without interrupting service. The BIG-IP product offloads SSL encryption and decryption, and load balances Web traffic across all available Application Center 2000 Web server clusters.

The BIG-IP product also permits instruction on when to add or remove nodes depending on the particular function Application Center 2000 is performing at any given time. When Application Center is distributing new content or application updates, it automatically communicates first to the BIG-IP product to tell it to temporarily remove the target node from service. This process can be executed an unlimited number of times, so regardless of the number of applications in a cluster the update or maintenance process becomes automatic and can be done gracefully without affecting production sites. Once the update or maintenance process is complete, Application Center can tell the BIG-IP product to automatically add the node(s) back into production. The integration of the BIG-IP product and iControl helps minimize administration, enables more timely and cost-effective delivery of updates and maintenance, significantly simplifies security, and increases uptime and availability.

About F5

F5 Networks is the global leader in Application Delivery Networking. F5 provides solutions that make applications secure, fast and available for everyone, helping organizations get the most out of their investment. By adding intelligence and manageability into the network to offload applications, F5 optimizes applications and allows them to work faster and consume fewer resources. F5's extensible architecture intelligently integrates application optimization, protects the application and the network, and delivers application reliability—all on one universal platform. Over 10,000 organizations and service providers worldwide trust F5 to keep their applications running. The company is headquartered in Seattle, Washington with offices worldwide. For more information, go to www.f5.com.

About Application Center

Microsoft Application Center 2000 is a deployment and management tool for high availability Web applications built on the Microsoft Windows® 2000 operating system. Application Center 2000 makes managing groups of servers as simple as managing a single computer, empowering developers and Web site administrators to deploy applications quickly and easily while minimizing in-depth application knowledge requirements. By automating deployment of applications from one server to another, Application Center speeds up transfer times, eliminates manual errors, and improves the quality of releases.