# F5 and Microsoft – Creating An Application-Aware Network With Microsoft Application Center and iControl

**"F5's iControl Architecture presents a unified solution, allowing users to scale out their applications while driving down costs."**

Garth Fort
Group Project Manager

Microsoft®

**Industry:**
Software

**Challenges:**
- Problems managing application availability and deployment
- Manual intervention and associated costs

**Solution:**
F5's iControl open architecture

**Benefits:**
- Intercommunication between applications and the network
- Scales applications while driving down costs
- Creates a true "application aware" network

## Overview

The goal for F5 and Microsoft® was to enable applications to send control messages to network devices, providing a layer between the network and the application as it added new intelligence. With this capability, the network can inform applications about availability, and the application instructs the network on where to direct traffic – without manual intervention and its associated costs. With this highly available, extremely secure solution in place, enterprises can expect increased ROI from their Web applications.

## Challenge

Today's applications consist of many bits and pieces that a limited workforce of skilled Web administrators may not have the time or resources to adequately manage and control. And efficiently managing application deployment and availability for large-scale web applications from multiple locales has been difficult at best.

"Customers are moving from a client-server architecture to a predominantly web-based distributed architecture," said Garth Fort, Group Project Manager, Microsoft. "Microsoft's .NET vision is about evolving our tools and our platform to help customer build the next generation applications. F5 Networks has built-out a comprehensive suite of products to manage the delivery of those applications in a distributed environment. It's an ideal fit."

The goal for both F5 and Microsoft was to enable applications to send control messages to network devices, providing a layer between the network and the application as it added new intelligence. With this capability, the network can inform applications about availability, for instance, and the application instructs the network on where to direct traffic – without manual intervention.

F5 realized that using XML was an excellent way to enable this intercommunication – marking one of the first times that a company from the network side had provided application-side interfaces to add intercommunication functionality to the network.

## Solution

F5's iControl™ is an integrated and open architecture for managing Internet traffic and applications. It provides an open and secured method of communications between the network and applications for traffic management and content delivery with secure communications; configuration, monitoring and information exchange; and policy management of servers, applications and the network. It also enhances the overall behavior of the network and