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Neil Derryberry
Manager of IT

PaperHost.com Improves Application Log in Time by Over 20% with F5’s BIG-IP® Local Traffic Manager

Industry:

Document Management Services

Challenges:

- Slow performance
- Poor reliability
- Lack of traffic control

Solution:

F5 BIG-IP® Local Traffic Manager with integrated SSL processing and iRules

Benefits:

- Faster log-in times
- SSL offloading; better server performance
- High availability and reliability
- iRule™ control

PAPERHOST.COM

Overview

Incorporated in 2000, PaperHost is an Atlanta-based developer and provider of web-based document management products and services. Clients can offload their document management and document hosting requirements to PaperHost, enjoying the benefits of an online platform for the management of their mission-critical business documents – without having to invest thousands of dollars in scanners, servers, software and support.

Recognizing the need for a robust application delivery networking product that would give their clients highly available and secure access to their documents and to their site, PaperHost chose F5’s BIG-IP Local Traffic Manager for unprecedented availability, reliability, scalability, and security.

Challenge

As the popularity of their business increased, and their customer base continued to grow, the pressure on the site infrastructure at PaperHost began to increase as well. Often there were hundreds of users online simultaneously, accessing multiple business-critical applications at any one time. And because everyone relied on processor-intensive SSL connections when accessing documents or services, the burden

on the servers themselves was also becoming an issue.

PaperHost’s antiquated traffic management system could no longer handle the strain – and the company behind those outdated load balancing products was often a no-show in fixing any problems.

Fishnet Security, a leading security solutions provider, worked with F5 and Paperhost to research and identify a new application delivery networking solution that would meet Paperhost’s requirements. FishNet’s expertise includes information security strategy, continuous risk and application assessment, planning, implementation, management, training, and support - enabling businesses to meet unique security needs.

Through the help of F5 and the recommendation of Fishnet, PaperHost brought in a pair of BIG-IP 3400 Local Traffic Managers with integrated SSL processing – and Fishnet had them successfully up and running within a week.

Solution

F5’s BIG-IP provides high-availability load balancing, fast and extremely intelligent layer 7 switching, granular interactive control, DoS protection, resource pooling, and a number of other features designed to help protect an enterprise’s Internet



presence and ensure that business-critical applications are always secure, fast and available.

For PaperHost, the results of bringing in BIG-IP were immediate.

“Once we got the systems installed to perform SSL termination, we improved our log in time by over 20%,” said Neil Derryberry, manager of IT for PaperHost. “We were able to offload the SSL processing overhead from our servers onto the BIG-IP – essentially allowing the servers to perform their job. That was a tremendous improvement, not to mention that now we only need one SSL certificate instead of several.”

BIG-IP seamlessly handled the growing traffic and application demands, while giving PaperHost more control over content to better serve their customers. Because BIG-IP is based on the TMOS operating system, it has the ability to examine the complete contents of transmissions passing between users and applications and modify them as needed. This powerful operating system also freed PaperHost to create a unique rule called an iRule that allowed them to customize and control their traffic even further.

“Our customers can access multiple different custom applications – and so we split those up using an iRule, based on the URI,” said Derryberry. “Now we know which applications are used more and can control our traffic better, which wasn’t possible with our previous traffic management systems. It’s been invaluable to us.”

However, one of the key benefits PaperHost experienced with the BIG-IP systems revolves around their proven reliability and robustness.

“Our previous solutions were suffering from strange failures that we were having a hard time nailing down, much less curing,” said Derryberry. “At one point we lost one box completely. BIG-IP handles everything very robustly – it does what it needs to do and it’s not something I have to worry about. I know it’s going to work.”

And like most businesses today, there’s often too much to do and not enough hours in the day, so the ease of management and administration that BIG-IP offers was also an important factor for PaperHost.

“It’s very easy to manage these systems from the GUI and it’s also easy to configure them from the command line,” Derryberry stated. “For example, when I build a virtual server and perform the steps to replicate those changes down to my secondary level, I know its going to work with BIG-IP. That wasn’t a given with our previous solution.”

Overall, the owner of Paperhost.com, James Coyle, has been pleased with the benefits BIG-IP has brought to the company.

“We now have the ability to load balance multiple types of applications and traffic and provide SSL encryption at the hardware layer,” Coyle said. “That’s why we think it’s worth the investment in this technology – it covers a wide breadth of features that otherwise would’ve had to be taken care of individually.”

“It’s very easy to manage, and we’ve only begun to scratch the surface with its capabilities,” added Derryberry. “And splitting our applications up with the iRule to gather key statistics has been invaluable. There’s no question mark as to what the BIG-IP’s have done for us.”

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