



“For a new venture like ours, network reliability is critical, and the F5 solution keeps our business going strong with this high-performance and highly redundant solution.”

James Everingham, CTO at Pixazza

Pixazza Uses F5 to Deliver Game-Changing Platform for Making Images Interactive

Pixazza develops and markets an innovative platform that makes web images interactive to promote products, advertise brands, and drive online retail sales. With Pixazza technology, consumers can discover information about an image—including how to purchase—by pausing a mouse cursor on it. Reliable, fast performance for users, even during high traffic times, is essential.

The company chose F5 BIG-IP Application Delivery Networking devices as a key component of its data center infrastructure. Since implementing the F5 devices, the company has experienced 100 percent uptime, even during extremely high traffic spikes of five-fold or greater. The highly scalable solution also provides Pixazza with room to support its future growth.

Business Challenges

Pixazza, founded in 2008, has created a web platform that enables consumers to explore products shown in pictures on the web to encourage online sales. In a Pixazza-enabled image, informational tags are displayed when viewers pause their mouse cursors over the items in the image, such as the suit jacket worn by an actor in an online picture. Viewers can see the brand of an item, where it can be purchased, view similar or related products, and can click to purchase.

Pixazza is an avenue for immediate consumer gratification—that is, consumers see something they like on the web and can immediately initiate a purchase.

Internet publishers who work with Pixazza generate incremental revenue through advertising, while also creating a more compelling experience for site visitors. Meanwhile, Pixazza’s advertisers gain the ability to connect with audiences in a new way and provide enhanced, convenient purchasing options. Pixazza serves more than 130 million unique visitors per month at a rate of 40 billion image views per year.

To highlight the value and effectiveness of Pixazza, the company often issues trial versions of its platform to major Internet publishers or retailers, which can result in extreme traffic spikes. “We can see a five-fold increase in traffic, or more, within

Overview

Industry

Internet Advertising

Challenges

- Ensure high availability for interactive web services
- Scale to support high traffic peaks and long-term growth

Solution

- BIG-IP® Local Traffic Manager™

Benefits

- 100% percent availability
- Ensures stability, high performance for consumers
- Builds business, promotes confidence through high availability
- Supports growth

an hour of starting an evaluation process,” explains James Everingham, Chief Technology Officer (CTO) at Pixazza.

The company also experiences higher than average traffic volumes during major events and holidays such as the Academy Awards, Grammy Awards, Mother’s Day, and Christmas.

Pixazza knew that it needed to be able to scale quickly to accommodate high traffic volumes. It could not risk alienating site visitors and potential customers with poor performance. To ensure fast load times for mouse-over content, Pixazza needed to be able to support up to 200 megabits of content per second.

Solution

When Pixazza designed its network infrastructure, it chose BIG-IP Local Traffic Manager (LTM) devices from F5 to optimize and support application delivery. Pixazza founders had previously used F5 products for other ventures and had found them to be robust, reliable, and highly scalable. “We knew from experience that including F5 devices as a core component of our infrastructure was a smart move,” says Everingham.

Pixazza uses multiple BIG-IP LTM 3600 devices to automatically direct user traffic among its web servers. Each request or connection that is triggered when a user pauses a cursor over an image travels through the F5 devices before it reaches a web server. That way, the BIG-IP devices can seamlessly redirect traffic away from potentially problematic servers or network components.

Pixazza administrators use the BIG-IP web-based dashboard to view real-time and historical system and performance data. “The charts and graphs are very useful and user-friendly, and the dashboard gives us a consolidated view into the network environment,” adds Everingham.

“With F5 as a key component of our infrastructure, we are confident that we can support our high traffic growth.”

As Pixazza grows, it can take advantage of many other F5 capabilities. For instance, BIG-IP LTM supports F5 iRules® technology—a customizable scripting language that gives IT departments complete and granular control over application traffic. iRules can be used to create custom redirects for flexibly managing IP traffic to web servers.

Pixazza can also take advantage of Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) offload capabilities to migrate CPU-intensive SSL encryption and decryption from its web servers to the F5 devices. Because the BIG-IP platform is built on the F5 TMOS® plug-in operating system, Pixazza can easily add new capabilities—such as application security, acceleration, or global load balancing to manage connections among multiple data centers—as its business needs evolve.

Benefits

Pixazza uses technology from F5 to provide high availability for its innovative service. With the solution, Pixazza can handle high volumes of web traffic seamlessly, ensuring that consumers can find and purchase products quickly and publishers and advertisers can maximize revenues. Further, the F5 solution provides Pixazza with ample room for growth.

Ensures stability, performance

By implementing BIG-IP devices from F5, Pixazza laid the groundwork for a reliable network infrastructure. “Like any Internet company, we can’t afford downtime or

erratic performance,” says Everingham. “To encourage adoption, we need to be confident that our audience will have a seamless experience.”

The BIG-IP devices ensure that user traffic is directed to healthy, available web servers so that content provided through mouse-overs is immediately accessible. Everingham explains, “The F5 devices ensure that users can access content according to their interests, learn more about our advertisers’ products, and make that immediate purchase if they so desire.”

Builds business, promotes confidence

The Pixazza business model is predicated on building strong relationships between Pixazza’s publishers and advertisers. “We need our service to be available so we can help our publishers and advertisers generate revenue,” says Everingham.

Since implementing BIG-IP LTM, Pixazza has experienced 100 percent scheduled uptime for its service. Everingham says, “For a new venture like ours, uptime is critical, and the F5 solution keeps our business going strong with this high-performance and highly redundant solution.”

Supports growth

Pixazza is a company with a unique idea and venture capital backing from Google Ventures. Pixazza is changing the way consumers interact with images and how publishers and advertisers reach consumers through online images. Major Internet publishers and retailers evaluate Pixazza services on a daily basis.

“We need to support the huge traffic spikes from customer evaluations and special events, in addition to increasing traffic volumes over time as our business expands,” says Everingham. “With F5 as a key component of our infrastructure, we are confident that we can support our high traffic growth.”

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