SIEBEL BUSINESS APPLICATIONS

F5 Intelligently Secures, Optimizes and Accelerates Oracle|Siebel Business Applications

Executive Summary

Siebel® Systems (now a part of Oracle®) and F5 Networks have created a solution for the successful delivery of versions 7 through 7.8 of Siebel Business Applications with F5's BIG-IP® application traffic management system. The BIG-IP system is the only 3rd party traffic management product to be a Siebel Supported Platform for version 7.8, and manages traffic at both the web server content and application server levels.

This system allows Siebel Business Applications customers to protect and enhance their investments in Siebel applications by delivering maximum availability, scalability, performance and security. The F5 FirePass controller SSL VPN offers remote users this same level of performance and secure access to Siebel resources, from any device, in any location. These solutions increase user productivity and satisfaction, while significantly reducing the total cost of ownership (TCO) for Siebel deployments.

Siebel has also validated WebAccelerator™ for Siebel 7. WebAccelerator is an advanced application delivery solution that provides superior Siebel web application performance for the WAN and branch office environments. WebAccelerator speeds up Siebel applications and others, often increasing interactive performance by 30% to 500%.

The F5 Networks BIG-IP Local Traffic Manager (LTM) is a centralized platform for use with Siebel Business Applications. Unlike other networking vendors who have validated their products to work with previous versions of Siebel, F5 and Siebel have developed integration with the BIG-IP system that automates much of the BIG-IP device configuration with Siebel 7.7 and 7.8, saving time and reducing errors.

With version 9, the BIG-IP system augments intelligent traffic management and secure application delivery with a suite of industry leading acceleration and optimization features to further enhance Siebel 7.7 and 7.8 deployments. For example, Siebel 7.7 end-user performance realized an improvement of over 125% in recent Gomez Network Performance testing. These results are particularly impressive given the nature of the Gomez testing environment; in contrast to LAN-based testing and best case claims, Gomez testing provides a true representation of Internet conditions, WAN issues, and other inefficiencies seen in full application transaction.

The goal of the alliance between Siebel Systems and F5 Networks is to offer customers a high performance, easy-to-deploy solution. By deploying the BIG-IP product together with Siebel Business Applications , enterprises can protect and enhance their investments in Siebel applications by delivering maximum availability, scalability, performance and security.

Challenges

Organizations typically invest millions of dollars in their Siebel Business Applications, and these applications are critical to the success of their businesses. These organizations cannot afford to have poor availability, scalability, performance, or security of their Siebel Business Applications if they expect to achieve an acceptable return on investment (ROI).

As of the release of Siebel 7.7, the traffic management product bundled with earlier versions is no longer supported by Siebel, so customers must choose a new solution. Organizations are challenged with finding a proven, Siebel-supported solution that helps them achieve greater reliability and scalability while increasing performance of their network and Siebel 7.7 and 7.8 applications.

In addition, today's dynamic network environments demand flexible deployment scenarios to easily accommodate infrastructure modifications, without costly disruptions. All business-critical traffic must be properly distributed across the available resources while it is securely and efficiently delivered to the intended destination.

Solution

When deployed with Siebel 7 through 7.8, the BIG-IP solution protects and enhances any enterprise's investment in Siebel applications by delivering maximum availability, scalability, performance and security. This allows for increased user productivity and satisfaction, while significantly reducing the total cost of investment. For example, when deployed with the BIG-IP system, Siebel 7.7 experienced an application response time improvement of 126%, the best overall user performance improvement of products tested with BIG-IP version 9 in Gomez Performance Network real-world testing.

Integrating F5 Networks' BIG-IP product with Siebel Business Applications results in advanced traffic management capabilities, as well as the application and user persistence required to scale and ensure transaction and session integrity for Siebel Business Applications.

Key Benefits of F5

- TMOS features improves performance for Siebel 7.7 end users by 126%
- Fast Cache offloads more than 70% of server connections
- Intelligent Compression achieves 87% bandwidth reduction for Siebel 7.7
- TCP Express provides a 85% reduction in timeout errors for dialup users

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Solution

The BIG-IP system inspects the packet type at the application layer to ensure that traffic reaches the optimum and appropriate server. With the BIG-IP product, the network is optimized to handle more traffic throughput without adding new equipment, resulting in a greater ROI. The BIG-IP system allows organizations to utilize multiple low-cost servers instead of large, multi-CPU servers, resulting in significant savings in associated server hardware costs.

In addition to intelligent traffic management functionality, the BIG-IP LTM offers an impressive set of new features to optimize and accelerate application performance with Siebel deployments. BIG-IP Fast Cache employs HTTP caching to increase server capacity and application delivery by offloading repetitive traffic from web and application servers. This caching functionality uses the available system memory (RAM) to store copies of frequently requested application content. With Fast Cache, organizations using Siebel 7.7 can offload more than 70% of server requests while simultaneously speeding end-user performance for frequently visited pages.

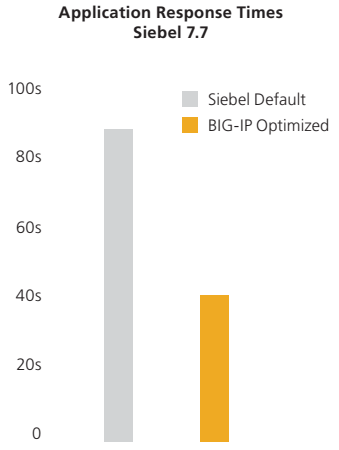

***Figure 1**: BIG-IP optimization features increase performance 126%*

At the heart of BIG-IP v9 lies the unique TMOS architecture, providing organizations with a unified system for optimal application delivery. TMOS, acting as a full proxy for Siebel 7.x deployments, offloads and manages traffic control, frees server resources, and increases server capacity for any application running through the BIG-IP device. During Gomez real-world condition testing, the BIG-IP acceleration features dramatically enhanced the end-user performance for Siebel 7.7 with a 126% improvement in application response time. The BIG-IP product further enhances Siebel application performance by efficiently offloading server-draining SSL (Secure Sockets Layer) encryption/decryption from Web servers.

The power and flexibility of the of TMOS enables the BIG-IP device to optimize and accelerate Siebel deployments with unique TCP optimization features along with Intelligent Compression and content spooling. Utilizing independent client and server side TCP stacks, BIG-IP TCP Express functionality bridges the gap between client and backend servers, optimizing each connection independently.

This functionality also enables the BIG-IP LTM to shield and transparently optimizes non-compliant TCP stacks running across servers within the corporate data center, thus providing dramatic performance improvements across the Siebel deployment. For example, when remote users connect to Siebel applications at varying connection rates, the BIG-IP device independently handles each connection, optimizing end-user experience and server performance. The reduction in TCP errors with TCP Express improved the transmission quality of Siebel 7.7 with an 85% reduction in timeout errors for dialup users in real world Gomez performance testing, providing dramatic performance and reliability gains for WAN communications essential to CRM deployments.

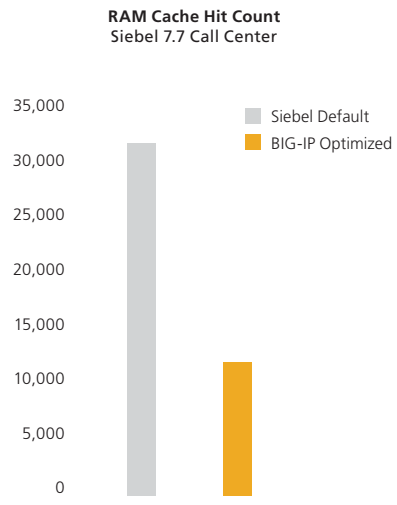

***Figure 2:** Fast Cache offloaded more than 70% of the connections from the Siebel servers in testing using the real-world Gomez Performance Network*

With its content spooling capability (part of the TCP Express feature set), the BIG-IP system further optimizes communications to any endpoint, allowing servers to process their workloads more efficiently, increasing server capacity for any application running through the BIG-IP device, and improving end-user experience. Utilizing these TCP optimization features, the BIG-IP system provides the highest levels of optimization, packet loss recovery and intermediation between suboptimal servers and clients. Thus the solution masks inefficiencies in the network while dramatically improving overall performance, minimizing cost and complexity of Siebel 7.x deployments, and reducing the need to update servers.

Along with industry-leading performance and reliability, the BIG-IP system provides impressive bandwidth savings for Siebel deployments through Intelligent HTTP Compression functionality. Compressing a variety of file types, including HTML, XML, Javascript, and J2EE applications, the BIG-IP system squeezes down HTTP traffic using industry-standard GZIP and Deflate compression algorithms, reducing bandwidth consumption and speeding user download times over slower or low bandwidth connections. For example, Gomez testing of Siebel 7.7 deployments revealed that the BIG-IP system can provide almost 90% bandwidth savings for the Call Center Application, the highest percentage of savings of products tested.

F5's WebAccelerator, validated by Siebel, enhances web application performance from any location to improve interactive performance, decrease download times for static and dynamic data, reduce bandwidth usage, and lower the cost of delivering web applications. Now available in symmetric configurations, where a WebAccelerator device is placed at key remote locations, provides the optimal acceleration, above and beyond TCP optimizations and HTTP compression.

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Solution - Continued

F5 and Siebel have developed integration between Siebel 7.7 and 7.8 and the BIG-IP system that automates much of the BIG-IP set-up and configuration in a Siebel environment, saving time and reducing the possibility of human error. F5's Siebel deployment guides, available in the F5 Solution Center, provide detailed, step-by-step procedures on how to configure the BIG-IP system with Siebel 7 through 7.8.

F5's WANJet devices further enhance web application performance from any location to improve interactive performance, decrease download times for static and dynamic data, reduce bandwidth usage, and lower the cost of delivering web applications. The F5 WANJet device employs adaptive TCP optimization (which combines session-level application awareness, persistent tunnels, selective acknowledgements, error correction, and optimized TCP windows) to fully utilize available bandwidth. This enables WANJet to adapt, in real time, to the latency, packet loss, and congestion characteristics of WAN links, and accelerate virtually all application traffic.

For the enterprise that wants to extend access to server resources to remote users, F5's FirePass SSL VPN provides secure access to application running on Siebel servers as easily as from inside the corporate LAN. After single authentication by FirePass controller, users pass through the corporate firewall and are able to access multiple resources from any device in any location without having to re-authenticate. The FirePass controller not only delivers and secures access to Siebel servers, but also allows for granular control of access to intranet resources on a group basis. For example, employees can be provided access to all intranet sites while partners are restricted to a special web host. FirePass controller's compression capabilities provide additional performance enhancement and server offload for Siebel 7 through 7.8 deployments while securely delivering business-critical content.

And for organizations with multiple data centers, the BIG-IP Global Traffic Manager (GTM) is the only solution that tracks application state and provides the intelligence to deliver a superior client experience. End user connections can now persist across applications and data centers and be automatically routed to the appropriate data center or server based on application state. Session integrity is always maintained, with no more broken sessions, lost or corrupted data. Organizations gain improved infrastructure scalability, lower TCO, and fewer support calls.

For comprehensive application security, F5 provides a complete, flexible, easy to manage web application security solution for Siebel deployments. The ICSA-certified BIG-IP Application Security Manager (ASM) enhances F5's robust application delivery networking solutions through secure application layer filtering, resulting in best-in-class security technology on a powerful traffic management platform. The ASM hides the web infrastructure so that hackers can't tell which servers are running on the network. It strips out identifying OS and web server information (such as version strings, messages, signatures, and fingerprinting) from message headers, conceals any HTTP error messages from users, and removes application error messages from pages sent to users while checking to ensure no server code or private HTML comments leak out onto public web pages. The BIG-IP ASM identifies, isolates, and blocks sophisticated attacks without impacting legitimate application transactions.

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 Oracle|Siebel

Siebel Systems (now a part of Oracle Corporation) is a leading provider of business applications software, enabling corporations to sell to, market to, and serve customers across multiple channels and lines of business. With more than 4,000 customer deployments worldwide, Siebel Systems provides organizations with a proven set of industry-specific best practices, CRM applications, market-leading analytics products, and business processes, empowering them to consistently deliver superior customer experiences and establish more profitable customer relationships.