



BuzzCity speeds up, retains balance

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Challenge: Massive page view growth required new servers on a weekly basis.

Solution: Deploy advanced network load balancing technology from Juniper.

Benefit: Reduced infrastructure costs and optimized traffic management.

For Singapore-based mobile content provider BuzzCity, expansion of its userbase to 1.2 million users in 38 countries created new speed demands on its content servers.

The company's servers needed to deliver mobile content to handheld devices and mobile phones via its global MyGamma mobile sites, which allow users to set up mobile communities, keep mobile blogs and organize social networking activities. User traffic was going up, and loads were growing rapidly.

"We were handling over a million page views daily when we started looking for load balancing solutions, and that number has since grown to 2.2 million a day," said Clifford Chew, BuzzCity's director of engineering. Chew said his firm was adding a new server almost every other week and expending more effort and manpower managing the 24x7 operations.

BuzzCity has partnerships with close to 200 publishers, providing members with access to more than 100 online merchants, supported by its network of servers in Singapore, China and the US.

Balancing applications

As applications and products become more complicated and load-intensive, he realized that not every problem can be solved by an off-the-Internet (shelf) product.

"We weren't new to the concept of load balancing and had already developed and honed our proprietary load balancing software," said Chew. "When we considered a hardware-based approach, it had to match up (and exceed) our proprietary solution in terms of scalability, functionality and performance."

BuzzCity eventually selected Juniper Networks' DX 3200 load balancing and application acceleration platform to speed up its content servers' performance. Chew said the Juniper DX platform was able to leverage TCP multiplexing and global server load balancing (GSLB) features to combine the large number of simultaneous TCP/IP data streams, thus reducing server requests.

Core networking and I/O responsibilities from web and application servers can now be offloaded to increase the performance of web applications. The device also simplified and improved datacenter architectures by replacing numerous point products. The GSLB capability

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allows server loads to be distributed across servers in different physical locations.

"Loads are now handled, and we're now reaching 80 million page views per month. We can add new servers with minimal effort," said Chew, adding that the application also brought functionality not available before.

"With the DX we're able to hot-swap entire servers [and] perform in-line upgrading such as adding more RAM," he said. "This enables us to maintain uninterrupted service to our users even during upgrades and hardware maintenance."

Improved client-server ratio

According to Chew, ROI benefits were realized as BuzzCity was able to lower the infrastructure cost while optimizing the high volume of intermittent, concurrent data requests to its mobile content system.

"We can now support a 60:1 client-to-server ratio and the acceleration is achieved without additional bandwidth purchase or forklift upgrades to our existing backend systems," said Chew. "The DX platform is also easily managed by our IT staff."

"Our infrastructure now supports seamless mobile transactions and we're seeing more demand for our mobile advertising," he concluded. "It's a thriving ecosystem--designed with, and built for, mobile users. Based on growth projections, we'll soon be expanding our capacity again--and buying more servers."

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