Technology In Our Lives

Ensuring Web Sites Can Handle Spikes In User Traffic

(NAPSA)—In general, the technology of the Internet doesn't draw attention to itself. In other words, you only notice it if there's a problem—if a site isn't loading properly or if it takes an inordinately long time to access specific content.

In a sense, the term "information superhighway" is a very apt description of the Internet, as the system is susceptible to traffic problems. Popular Web sites, or sites that host special content, can experience traffic jams, when too many people try to access the site at the same time.

Olympics on the Web

In December 2007, CCTV.com signed a partnership with the International Olympic Committee to stream 3,800 hours of the 2008 Summer Olympics content over the Internet, including the opening and closing ceremonies and all the sporting competitions.

As the major Internet provider of Olympic content, CCTV.com needed to upgrade its networks and systems to support the huge number of users expected during the Games. It found a solution in local traffic management servers from F5 Networks. The company's BIG-IP servers were set up in 10 major Chinese cities and acted as "traffic cops" for applications, data and user requests going over the Web.

According to CSM Media Research, the number of unique visitors to CCTV.com reached 25.13 million on August 8, during the live telecast of the Olympic Games opening ceremony. Yet despite the heavy traffic, site visitors were able to watch the Games online without any performance degradation or service interruptions.

Web games

Microsoft's MSN Games is one of the largest and busiest gaming portals on the Internet, bringing casual gaming to multiple devices and platforms. The site averages 12,000 page requests per second, 200,000 concurrent sessions and more than 8 million page views per day. Meanwhile, gamers aren't inclined to stick around if the site is slow or unresponsive.

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But achieving top performance isn't easy; one reason is the sheer scale of the company's Washington-based operations: 100 application servers fronted by 25 Web servers. All this gear now helps MSN Games support as many as 250,000 concurrent sessions with 15,000 page requests per second. To handle all this traffic, the company ultimately chose F5, deploying two BIG-IP servers in their Northwest server farm, which has enabled them to vastly improve their ability to do server maintenance by pushing traffic to other servers without dropping connections.

For more information on how the company's servers work to improve the overall Internet experience, visit www.f5.com.