A Virtual Challenge

Lori MacVittie, 2008-06-05

According to a recent CIO article and survey data, the top challenge to virtualization success today is balancing server workloads and maintaining application service levels. That makes sense; if you're going to create 3 or 4 or 99 virtual servers you need to be sure that the workload isn't going to suck dry the resources available on any particular machine. And, too, you'll probably need some solution to load balance those applications across virtual instances.

That part, at least, seems easy: *get thee a load balancer*, pronto. Turns out that the concern regarding balancing server workloads is more complex than most likely realize. A load balancer will, in fact, distribute server workloads across virtual instances. It likely won't, however, do so in an intelligent way and it almost certainly won't do much to ensure that service levels are maintained.

Top Challenges to Virtualization Success

Balancing server workloads and maintaining application service levels	**64%**
IT organization politics	37%
Measuring ROI	30%
Governance	24%
Pushback from business leaders	20%
Revamping chargeback systems for the business	20%
None of the above/not applicable	11%

(Respondents chose up to three)

SOURCE: CIO research

Application delivery will, however, address *both* those challenges in an easy, consolidated, green, efficient (have I hit all the buzzwords yet?) and flexible way. Seriously, an application delivery fabric is the best way to address this type of challenge and it does provide all benefits in one way or another.

You see, an intelligent application delivery controller understands the load on the server and can decide - in real-time - whether any given request should go to one server or another based on that understanding. So if *Virtual Server A* on *Real Server 1* super busy at the moment, an application delivery controller can send the request to *Virtual Server B ,* instead. *Virtual Server B* might be on *Real Server 1,* or it might be on *Real Server 2*. It really doesn't matter, unless you want to start factoring in both the current application performance within a virtual server AND the resources available on the real server. Regardless of what factors you want to consider, an intelligent application delivery controller can take them into consideration and **balance server workload** across instances in a way that **maintains application service levels**.

Want to take it further? Do you want to automatically provision those servers to get the most out of your resources? Consider an application delivery network that can integrate with popular virtualization technology like VMWare. Such integration takes solves the problem of balancing server workload by dynamically increasing or decreasing the available server instances in real-time, according to current network, server, and user conditions.

So if you're struggling with balancing the load across servers - virtual or not - check out an application delivery network so you can move on to the next challenge: IT organizational politics.

Sorry, I wouldn't touch *that* one with a 10 foot patch cable.

Imbibing: Coffee

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