

F5 Friday: Enhancing Microsoft Exchange 2013



Lori MacVittie, 2012-21-09

#Microsoft #Exchange [load balancing](#) is just the beginning...



Throughout the years, F5 BIG-IP has been a critical component supporting Microsoft Exchange to implement a variety of performance, security, and architectural requirements.

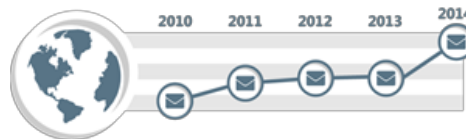
During that time, we've seen Microsoft Exchange evolve itself from a fairly simple, small business solution to a robust enterprise-class solution with an integrated ecosystem of services providing for communication, collaboration, and cooperation.

As Microsoft prepares to launch its latest version of Exchange, again we're seeing some evolutionary changes in its architecture. Most prominent is the elimination of a requirement for persistence; the Client Access Server (CAS) component is now a stateless proxy. For those paying attention through the years, the implementation of persistence within Microsoft Exchange deployments was more often than not architecturally designated to an F5 BIG-IP.

Does the elimination of the requirement render BIG-IP obsolete?

Of course not. While there's been some conjecture that layer 4 load balancing services will suffice for CAS 2013 (and for simple load balancing scenarios, it will) such statements are short-sighted in recognizing the increasing role of mobile and roaming clients, and the need to address core performance and security of public-facing applications (of which Exchange is certainly one). The delegation of persistence management to BIG-IP was often deemed most efficient because BIG-IP was a part of the architecture for other application delivery services – perimeter security, performance, server efficiency, multi-site resiliency, and, of course, scalability.

Scale and multi-site resiliency are imperatives today, with growth of users and devices and locations from which e-mail needs to and will be accessed. A distributed workforce can't afford to lose productivity due to slow delivery of e-mail or inability to readily access important content via any access medium, regardless of location. These are the kinds of challenges F5 BIG-IP addresses over and above routine tasks like load balancing.



The number of worldwide email accounts is projected to increase from over 2.9 billion in 2010 to over 3.8 billion by 2014.

These challenges have not been eliminated with Microsoft's most recent version of Exchange, and BIG-IP is still the ADC of choice for providing these services for deployments large and small. BIG-IP does layer 4 load balancing just as well as layer 7, after all, but also offers a robust set of delivery services that go well beyond either function. Ryan Korock, Technical Director focusing on Microsoft-partner initiatives, has [a great list of 8 reasons](#) why an ADC remains invaluable to Microsoft Exchange implementations that goes into more detail on what BIG-IP has – and continues – to offer Microsoft Exchange deployments.

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