

# F5 Friday: How About a Little Vendor as a Service?



Lori MacVittie, 2010-29-10

*Automated configuration analysis that's accessible as a service. How cool is that?*



Tuning infrastructure that's designed to mediate for applications can be difficult, especially when there are a lot of knobs and buttons to push, pull, twist and turn. It's often not convenient to wait for a field engineer or walk through a configuration on the phone with a support engineer and it's certainly frustrating for everyone involved to discover after hours (or days) of searching that the source of a particular problem was a common misconfiguration.

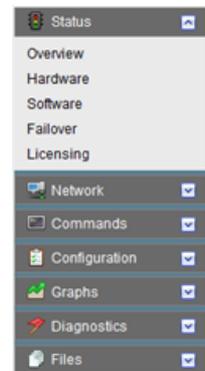
F5 aims to change that process with iHealth.

## IT as a SERVICE

The concept of "IT as a Service" is based on self-service; the ability of customers – internal or external – to interact with services on their own that provide both business and technical value. In the world of [cloud computing](#) this is becoming synonymous with application and server infrastructure resource provisioning, but as a general theme IT as a Service is about enabling all aspects of IT – from provisioning to management to support – as services that are better able to support the volatile and growing environments in which applications are being deployed. But the focus of IT as a Service is often on the business stakeholder as the end-user, even though for myriad data center services and resources it is [other IT folks](#) who need the capability to self-manage, not necessarily business stakeholders.

One of the key components of all scalable data center architectures is application delivery. Application delivery comprises a wide variety of technologies – from acceleration to security to optimization and [load balancing](#) – and the deployment of such technology often results in complex networking and application networking configurations. It is not always obvious whether a performance issue is the result of a misconfiguration at the network or application network layer, or whether a knob or button simply hasn't been dialed up- or down. With years of application delivery tuning experience in thousands of organizations, F5 has an extensive knowledge base upon which to draw in virtually any situation.

But sharing that knowledge can be difficult, and while F5 has documented many of these "best practices" in [solution profiles](#) and technical notes and [deployment guides](#), often times just knowing where to start looking can be a challenge.



That's where iHealth comes in.

## CONFIGURATION ANALYSIS as a SERVICE

## BIG-IP iHealth Diagnostics

<b>Runs against a database which includes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Known issues</li><li>• Common configuration mistakes</li><li>• Best practices</li></ul>
<b>The results are prioritized and provide descriptions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Known issue</li><li>• Recommendations for resolution</li><li>• A link to the AskF5™ Knowledge Base (for more detailed information)</li></ul>
<b>Using advanced heuristics, the tool can determine when a system is operating outside normal levels</b>	<b>Steps can then be taken, based on this data to improve performance</b>
<b>Included is functionality to check for security issues and recommend patches or software updates</b>	<b>To provide fast access to emerging threats and new issues, content is added regularly</b>

An exclusive, online support service available to F5 customers and partners, iHealth is designed to assist in improving performance of application delivery infrastructure. Through performance monitoring and automated analysis, available as a web-based application, iHealth provides insight into BIG-IP deployments and can automatically identify a variety of performance issues and common misconfiguration.

iHealth validates product configurations against best practices and displays heuristics data in an easy-to-understand format based on the BIG-IP interface. iHealth is

also capable of alerting customers to available upgrades that optimize performance and help assess the impact of industry or regulatory changes, such as the [effect on SSL performance when migrating from 1024-bit keys to 2048-bit keys](#).

The iHealth service analyzes configuration and performance data, and prioritizes existing performance challenges. This automated capability leverages F5's years of experience working with global organizations to provide convenient diagnostic and remediation information and offer detailed recommendations to address any issues. These recommendations also include links to the [AskF5 Knowledge Base](#) for detailed solutions and procedures.

The BIG-IP iHealth Viewer displays clear summaries of hardware, software, failover configurations and Licensing details, as well as customizable graphs of performance metrics including:

- CPU usage
- Throughput
- Memory
- RAM cache

Additionally, iHealth allows customers a convenient, accurate way in which they can share deployment configuration with F5 professionals should opening a support case become necessary. iHealth can quickly gather all relevant information and provide a concise snapshot for support professionals to work with, helping improve interactions between customers and F5, and ultimately leading to a swifter resolution.

iHealth services are now available worldwide at no charge for all F5 customers with a current services maintenance agreement. Customers can access iHealth services directly at <http://iHealth.f5.com>.

Happy analyzing!



Related blogs & articles:

- [iHealth Presentation](#) 
- [F5 Friday: You'll Catch More Bees with Honey\(pots\)](#)
- [F5 Friday: Efficient Long Distance Transfer of VMs with F5 BIG-IP WOM and NetApp Flexcache](#)
- [F5 Friday: Rackspace CloudConnect - Hybrid Architecture in Action](#)
- [All F5 Friday Entries on DevCentral](#)
- [F5 Friday: The 2048-bit Keys to the Kingdom](#)
- [F5 Friday: Gracefully Scaling Down](#)
- [F5 Friday: Beyond the VPN to VAN](#)
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