

iApp–Benefits



Karen Jester, 2011-23-09

So let's start today by looking at some of the key features of iApp using the F5 Exchange 2010 template as an example. A user would select a template they wished to use from a drop down field in the user interface. Once selected, they will be presented with the questions and input fields defined by the iApp author. It looks like this.....

The screenshot shows the F5 iApp configuration interface for the EXCHANGE template. The interface is divided into several sections:

- Template Selection:** A dropdown menu is set to 'Microsoft_Exchange_2010'.
- Welcome to the Microsoft Exchange 2010 template:** A message indicating that the template supports Microsoft Exchange 2010 and 2010 SP1.
- Analytics:** A series of questions and input fields:
 - Do you want to enable Analytics so that you can view application statistics? (This may affect system performance.) - Yes
 - About creating your own Analytics profiles: For full functionality and flexibility, we recommend that you create a custom Analytics profile to select it from the list below.
 - Do you want to use a default Analytics profile or select a custom profile? - Select a Custom Profile
 - Which Analytics profile do you want to use? - EXCHANGE_A/R
- Global Questions:** A series of questions and input fields:
 - Do the Exchange 2010 servers have a route back to application clients via this BIG-IP system? - No
 - Will you have more than 65,000 connections at one time? If so, you will need to enter at least one IP address for each 65,000 connections. - No
- Outlook Web App, Outlook Anywhere, ActiveSync, and Autodiscover Questions:** A series of questions and input fields:
 - Are you deploying Outlook Web App? - Yes
 - Are you deploying Outlook Anywhere? - Yes
 - Are you deploying ActiveSync? - Yes
 - Are you deploying Autodiscover? - Yes

F5-provided iApp templates all have key features that help bridge that IT knowledge gap I spoke about previously.

- **Goal-based configuration** - Goal-based questions are used to translate industry jargon into terms more appropriate to the end-user's goal. An example of this is when we refer to a specific servers IP address, rather than calling it a node (an F5-specific term).
- **Application specific** - We use vendor referenced names, such as autodiscover and ActiveSync(tm) that enable the network team to speak the application team's language to get more accurate and faster results.
- **Inline help** - Inline help is also added where needed to give additional information to help the user make the appropriate choice for their environment or to notify them of any related impact to system performance or security.
- **Dynamic questions** - F5-provided iApps allow the user to determine which application roles apply to their environment and only show the questions necessary for configuring those services.
- **F5 module aware** - Templates will ask you if you wish to provide acceleration and/or security services for your application based on licensed F5 modules.

All these features enable IT network and application teams to bridge the knowledge and language gap to extract application knowledge that is *unique* to their environment. This significantly improves the accuracy and speed of their deployment. One possible side effect might just be the network and application folks getting along a little better. I am not talking about IT world peace, but maybe a marked reduction in finger pointing and frustration. Or perhaps even a friendly, "Hello, how are you doing?" at the coffee machine.

If you don't believe that can happen yet, let me show you one other major benefit of F5-provided iApp templates. Remember when I said in the last paragraph, "application knowledge that is *unique* to their environment?" That's because **anything that is not unique to the environment is auto configured for the user!** We have taken our years of hands-on experience with applications and our business partners to develop configuration that optimizes the network for mission critical applications in a matter of minutes. Using our Exchange example that means *nearly 90% of the configuration is done for you*, and not only is your network optimized for high availability, but security and acceleration too. That means a huge reduction in time spent readying your network for your application and as well as chances for misconfigurations. **game changing**



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