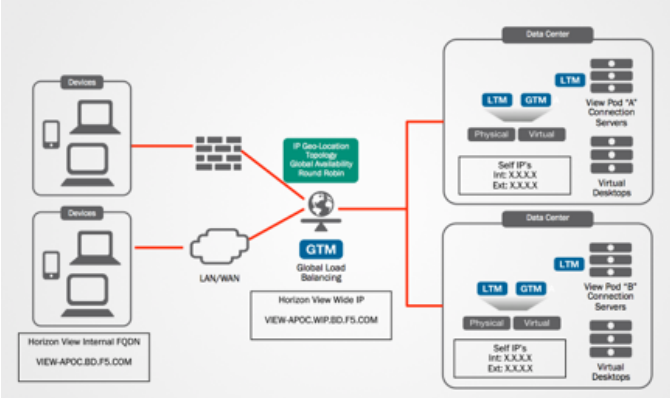
Managing Horizon Traffic across Multiple Data Centers with BIG-IP DNS

Justin Venezia, 2016-01-01

In a typical single data center environment, VMware Horizon virtual desktop clients typically use a fully qualified domain name (FQDN) when accessing desktop and application resources. More and more customers are distributing their Horizon application and desktop infrastructure to distribute across multiple physical/logical data centers. Some of the business and technical reasons may include disaster recovery, system resiliency, and elastic desktop/application capacity.

How are these multi-data center implementations of Horizon accessed? One common scenario is to provide a specific domain name to users either based on a user's geographical location (for example, https://europe.example.com) or a user's business unit (for example, https://finance.example.com). If the user has an ability to access resources from multiple data centers, the user's overall experience might be sub-optimal if the end user is not being connected to the most appropriate, optimal data center.

By deploying BIG-IP DNS (formerly Global Traffic Manager) with Horizon View, a single namespace (for example, https://desktop.example.com) can be provided to all end users - one URL to remember. BIG-IP DNS and BIG-IP Local Traffic Manager (LTM) also work together to ensure that requests are intelligently routed to a preferred data center, regardless of the user's current location.



In this example, users leverage a single namespace (view-apoc.bd.f5.com). They will initially connect to BIG-IP DNS (GTM). BIG-IP DNS will make a routing decision (based on availability, topology, connection, etc.) and then send the user to a specific data center. The user will then login with the Horizon View client and access their desktop/applications. If a data center is inaccessible, new users are automatically routed to the available data center; existing users will be disconnected and then reconnect to the live data center.

Taking advantage of these key BIG-IP modules (BIG-IP DNS and LTM) empowers IT staff to integrate multiple VMware Horizon pods or physical sites for source desktops, all without disrupting users. By enabling users to reconnect to their existing persistent desktop source when required and providing a dynamic and agile infrastructure that can adapt to planned and unplanned events, the BIG-IP system becomes key to successful VMware Horizon deployments.

We've developed a step-by-step guide for implementing BIG-IP DNS across two (or more) data centers using BIG-IP DNS and BIG-IP Local Traffic Manager, which you can download here. You can also do a walk through of this very setup in the VMware Hands-On-Lab (Look for HOL-MBL-1659) by clicking on the following link - http://labs.hol.vmware.com/HOL/catalogs/lab/2078.

F5 Networks, Inc. | 401 Elliot Avenue West, Seattle, WA 98119 | 888-882-4447 | f5.com

F5 Networks, Inc.
Corporate Headquarters
info@f5.com

F5 Networks
Asia-Pacific
apacinfo@f5.com

F5 Networks Ltd.
Europe/Middle-East/Africa
emeainfo@f5.com

F5 Networks
Japan K.K.
f5j-info@f5.com