

# New Year, Fewer Predictions



**Don MacVittie, 2012-10-01**

After a couple of weeks of vacation, some minor oral surgery, a birthday, and my five year anniversary at F5 Networks (has it really been that long?), I'm back to annoy or please you some more. Our holidays were acceptable, and here's hoping all of you had an enjoyable time also.

One thing I noticed is either that I was out of touch over vacation, or there were far fewer "tech predictions for 2012" type articles than has been the case in the past. I think that's a good thing. Let's just deal with things as they come, shall we? We've got a ton of new technology covering everything from Security to Storage and every vertical you can think of, and there needs to be a bit of a breather while it's all figured out.

What I didn't see that I missed though was some talk about what happened in Tech that was big last year. I know F5 had some pretty big announcements – from [I Am Chaos](#), talking about datacenter security, to heterogeneous virtualization, the gang here has been rolling along, makes me wonder what the pundits thought were the really cool tech (not consumer) things of 2011. Partially because I would hope that some of our cool items like deploying and configuring network resources in 10% of the time it traditionally takes (using iApps) would be on the list, partially because if they're not, imagine how cool the things that *are* on the list must be. I like to hear what others thought was cool, if for no other reason than to scan the list and see what might have flown under my radar.

Cloud Computing, no doubt, would be on the list, though I think the industry still struggling with what exactly cloud is. Platform As A Service? Software As A Service? Virtualization With Network Elements? Whatever The Heck You Want It To Be? :-). We'll figure it out, but meanwhile, success stories are starting to come in, which is good. Doesn't matter how "hot" a technology is, companies are slow to bet their entire business on them before others say "hey! we used it for X and it worked really well!" and technologies to help IT get control in-the-cloud at a level closer to their datacenter control are coming around. We were in that group of cool new things.

No doubt the whole App Store thing would be on there. Tech companies hopped on that bandwagon hard in 2011, and you can get apps to do all sorts of important IT functions these days. We have an app for our VPN product now too, and other companies have gone farther than F5 has. The interesting thing about discussing "app store" as an entity is that Apps like our VPN client for Android are being discussed in the same phrase as games like Defender. That'll have to sort itself out a bit, of course more people are going to download a free game that works on any Android platform than are going to download a free tool that is only useful if you have specialized hardware. And Angry Birds? Yeah. Enough said.

The relative silence of [Microsoft](#) should be making the list too. They've been a force to be reckoned with for well over a decade, but in 2011 they were relatively quiet. I don't expect that to run into 2012, but it did give some smaller (and larger) competitors a chance to breath a little and get their voices heard in several market spaces. That's not to say Microsoft was silent, but the normal cycle of "let's mention Microsoft in every datacenter-relevant article" and "there's another Microsoft advertisement" didn't seem to be so prevalent.

The increasing use of Internet video by consumers should be on there. This is not a consumer list or we'd have to go into new iPhones and tablets and all of that, but the traffic generated by video is much larger than the traffic generated by other forms of content, and seriously, at one of our houses we have no cable-style connections at all. We watch TV with a [Roku](#) and fiber optics. Isn't the 21st century grand? It is, but there's a limit to how far we can push the volume through the Internet. And while I've never been one of the "XML will burn up the Internet" crowd, it will be interesting to see how much we can slam through in video before performance starts to degrade more generally. Looking at YouTube and the volume they handle over their limited Internet connections, I'm guessing we're nowhere close to performance degradation overall.



And of course Diverse Distributed DoS – or 3DoS as Lori calls it – must be on the list. It caused all of us to pause and rethink the overlap of security and availability. It certainly helped us decide that BIG-IP, correctly configured, could protect your datacenter. When the attack is too much for a standard firewall to handle, it's good to have a piece of hardware whose purpose is to handle high-volume traffic and can detect this type of attack. That's not to mention the changing attitudes about security that a veritable wave of leaks produced.

That's five. They're not tied to products, but to events. No doubt I missed some important ones, but it *was* an interesting year. 2012 holds promise of being just as exciting. I can't speak for you, but I'm happy to ride along and see what they are. Some of the things we announced late in 2011 promise to bring huge benefits to our customers in 2012, so both from a more general and an employer-specific perspective I'm thrilled to see 2012.

And it's all getting better. There's a poll out today that Lori forwarded to our team – 46% of Americans think tablets will replace computers. I know I use my Android tablet for a lot more than I expected to when she bought it for me, just a few months ago, so maybe they're right. But I doubt it will be in 2012, there's still a lot that I head to the computer for.

Anyway, thought I'd welcome you all to 2012, and say "I'm Baaaaaaaaaack!"

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