

# The Application Delivery Network must promote Innovation



**Mohan Veloo, 2014-28-02**

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Today's best-run organizations are constantly challenged by the rate at which IT is evolving. Mobility, Cloud computing, Virtualization, Software Defined Networking are all solving important application problems. They are however double-edged as they uncover new challenges at the same time. In this continuously evolving environment, organizations need one constant – an Application Delivery Fabric enough to support and advance continuous innovation.

To successfully deliver innovative applications, IT must be able to:

- Optimise application performance for its users anywhere, anytime and on any device;
- Flex and scale on demand;
- Support rapid deployment
- Do all these securely.

The inflexibility of current traditional infrastructures has proven to be an obstacle to this. A programmable and scalable application delivery fabric with application services can bridge the gap. Adding application services to the network, opens up a rich set of functionality that can be leveraged to improve the user experience and improve security.

Therefore in this application fabric, an application should be able to avail itself to a set of application services e.g. performance and security. Another application in the same fabric may avail itself to another set of application services e.g. mobility and availability.

However, as the application environment gets more complex and heterogeneous, application fluency becomes mandatory. The requirements for a high frequency trading application is vastly different from Microsoft Exchange. Each of these applications require different application service policies. Setting up and testing these policies can be a daunting, labour intensive process. Having reusable, pre-defined templates for each application can vastly reduce management overhead, saves time in deployment and increases reliability!

Keeping pace with constant business change requires applications to be developed, prototyped, tested and deployed rapidly. This demands an infrastructure that is 'innovation ready'. Having the capability to easily program both the control and data plane in their network infrastructure makes it easier for IT to enable software defined application services.

To do this, IT needs to:

- Create a fabric of scalable and interconnected devices;
- Connect the fabric to the application and client networks;
- Enable templates to define policies that deliver application fluent services. This template needs to be repeatable;
- Open the management and control of this fabric to orchestration and integration tools.

The result is a fabric capable of delivering the right application services to the right application at the right point in the network. For any application on any network. This fabric must have at its heart a platform that is capable of delivering application security, performance and availability services. The F5 BIG-IP platform, for example, provides a wide range of features and functions designed to optimize and deliver applications securely to users.

This will ultimately allow IT to develop, optimize and deploy applications faster, achieve better alignment to the business.

Using standard application services from the fabric reduces coding and costs. An efficient application delivery fabric optimises capacity because services are delivered from a pool of resources, reducing spend through better utilization.

Most of all, a scalable, programmable, application fluent fabric enables organizations to innovate rapidly in a business environment where the only constant is change.

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