v.10 - New iControl Interfaces.

Don MacVittie, 2009-09-04

For those who missed it, we're in the middle of the IT Revolution lead by our v.10 release of TMOS and our new 8900 model. Due to all the great stuff to talk about in the new version of TMOS, I have put off the Load Balancing for Developers and Reasons You Need File Virtualization series on hold for this week, and possibly next. Then I'll hop back on them and we'll explore ADCs for Developers and more Reasons You Need File Virtualization.

As part of the revolution, you need more control. Or iControl, as the case may be. We heard that, and the mighty smart folks in our Product Development and Product Management groups have cooked up just such a recipe for your enjoyment.

Like so many things, iControl has grown with the release of v.10. While the changes are not as sweeping as they are in some parts of the BIG-IP architecture, there are enough new interfaces to warrant their own blog entry.

The biggest change in the iControl Interfaces (in terms of number of new APIs) is support for iSessions, but that gets us into a chicken-and-egg scenario, so I'll hold off on talking about them in detail until I cover iSessions in the coming weeks from end-to-end. They short version is that iSessions allow you to create tunnels between BIG-IPs to help manage geographically dispersed data centers, and the iControl APIs give you fine-grained control of this capability on the BIG-IP.

The TCP and SIP profiles got facelifts with a couple of new APIs to help you set their profile-specific information, Clustering and Configsync both have added capabilities to help you manage your box or cluster, and the inet module now lets you set the hostname through iControl.Software Management got a ton of new routines that revolve around the new Logical Volume Manager (lvm) that will help you manage the version and test environments on your box (more on LVM next week), and System/Failover has some new routines for setting a box as manually offline.

As you can see, the changes are pretty pervasive, but they're additive. To my knowledge there aren't changes to existing calls, so you should be able to download the v.10 API and rebuild your existing applications with it (or change your environment to point to it for script-based solutions), and you'll be off to the races.

The most exciting APIs to me are the system/software management ones. With them you have a new world of possibilities for testing on different versions of TMOS, for hotfixing boxes and checking results, even for controlling which image boots for the cluster – but more on that in our LVM articles. If you can't wait, our Technical Marketing Managers have penned an excellent whitepaper on the topic, read it here. Indeed, find the full list of whitepapers they've developed, datasheets, and links to other documentation here.

Joe has thrown together a list of the changes iControl has undergone in Version 10 on the wiki, and each line of that list links to a Wiki page with details about the command. A handy reference for keeping in your back pocket.

That's it for today, until next time!

Don.