

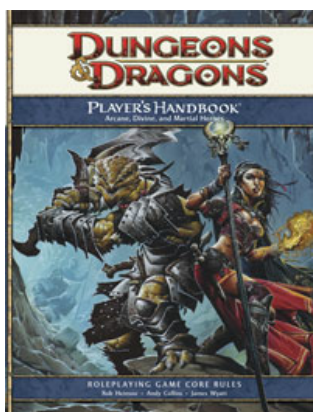
What Dungeons & Dragons and Application Delivery Have in Common



Lori MacVittie, 2008-16-06

Yes, I've got gaming on the brain after this month's release of the latest edition of D&D and a [weekend with friends](#) "geeking" out with polyhedral dice and imaginary monsters.

You might recall that [Don stood in line at midnight](#) earlier this month to pick up our copy of the newest (4th) edition of [Dungeons & Dragons](#) (D&D). Since then we've been dissecting the game, noting its similarities and [differences from earlier versions](#). Bemoaning the loss of some features while nodding our heads appreciatively at some of the other changes.



It took me most of the following weekend, though, to stop viewing this newest edition of the game through my 2nd Edition lenses. Basically, I wanted this edition to "go back to its roots" and be more like the game I learned to play and loved for so long rather than evolve into something new and different.

The increasing number of [blogs](#) and forum posts and [comments](#) regarding load balancing got me thinking about how our familiarity with previous "editions" of things colors our view of the present. Because [application delivery controllers](#) evolved from [load balancers](#), many people haven't taken the time to really dig into the new features available and simply discount application delivery controllers as "expensive hardware load balancers."

Both application delivery controllers and the 4th edition of D&D are hampered by our experiences with previous "editions". Many folks who play D&D won't buy 4th edition, won't read the books, won't try to play the game, and won't research what may be new and different about it. They'll simply make assumptions based on past editions and, like some who talk about [application delivery and load balancing](#), they'll make statements about the newest "edition" that are wrong because of those assumptions.

I admit that I spent the first weekend after 4th edition's release doing just that. I refused to even give the newest edition a chance, did not read my PH (Player's Handbook) thoroughly, dismissed out of hand that there was anything of value in this increasingly expensive book. But after many discussions with Don, who does and has read the books very carefully, I've discovered that there are new and interesting things about the game that I do like, that *do*, in fact, add value. And that's very much true of application delivery controllers, if you take the time to read, research, and get to know more about them.



When it comes down to it, load balancers are to application delivery what 2nd Edition D&D is to 4th Edition D&D. It's the same core functionality, but it's wrapped up, supported, and improved by a whole lot of new and exciting features, mechanics, and capabilities.

So if you're one of those folks who think of [F5 BIG-IP](#) or its competitors as just "expensive load balancers", take a minute to reconsider that position and [read up on what's changed](#). You'll discover that no, they really aren't, they're quite a bit more than that.

And what you find in "quite a bit more" may surprise you, and help you architect a better, more manageable, more secure application infrastructure solution.

Imbibing: Coffee

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