

Your Applications Deserve iApps



Peter Silva, 2016-21-06



F5 iApps are user-customizable frameworks for deploying applications that enables you to 'templazize' sets of functionality on your F5 gear. You can automate the process of adding virtual servers or build a custom iApp to manage your iRules inventory.

Application ready templates were introduced in BIG-IP v10 and the goal was to provide a wizard for the often deployed applications like Exchange, SharePoint, Citrix, Oracle, VMware and so forth. This allowed the abstraction some of the configuration details and reduced the human error when following the pages of the thick deployment guides for those applications.

Application templates were great but there was no way to customize the template either during the deployment or adjust it after.

Then came [iApps](#)[®].

Introduced in TMOS v11, iApps is the current BIG-IP system framework for deploying services-based, template-driven configurations on BIG-IP systems. iApps bundles all of the configuration options for a particular application together.

[Roughly a third of F5 customers](#) use iApps and they are especially popular for more complex configurations, like Microsoft Exchange, for example, which requires up to 1200 mouse clicks to configure manually and only 50 mouse clicks to configure with the iApp. iApps are also often used to roll out similar configurations to multiple BIG-IP's. Some customers run hundreds of iApps, some run none--the choice is yours.

Here is one example of iApp customization and its evolution. When we released SAML support in v11.3, many customers wanted to use BIG-IP APM as a SAML Identity Provider (IdP) for Office365 but there are a few steps to configure that in BIG-IP. Configure Active Directory, then SAML, then the access policy and so forth. One of our very smart Security Architects, [Michael Koyfman](#), wanted to make that task simple, repeatable and accurate.



He decided to write an O365 iApp and posted it to DevCentral where there was immediate interest from the community. From that, Product Development engineers rewrote it to follow their libraries and best practices and then moved to the supported status. You can now use this [F5 supported iApp template](#) to configure the BIG-IP system as a SAML IdP to Microsoft Office 365 applications, such as Exchange and SharePoint. This template configures the BIG-IP APM system as an IdP for Office 365 to perform single sign-on (SSO) between the local Active Directory user accounts and Office 365-based resources such as Microsoft Outlook Web App and Microsoft SharePoint.

But we didn't stop there.

Since it is the same framework and easily extensible to add more services to an iApp, they took it a step further. With the O365 iApp as the basis, the team then built a [SaaS Federation iApp](#) which allows you to configure BIG-IP APM as SAML IdP to 11 commonly used SaaS applications including Salesforce, Concur, WebEx, O365 and others. Now, with a single iApp, you can federate your employees to many SaaS applications easily, efficiently and securely. This iApp also went through a beta period on DevCentral and was recently released as a F5 supported iApp.

Welcome to the iApp template for SaaS SAML Identity Provider

EARLY RELEASE	This template has not yet been fully tested at F5, and therefore has limited support. When testing is complete, it will move from the RELEASE CANDIDATE directory to parent directory of the iApp template package.
Introduction	Use this template to configure BIG-IP to act as SAML Identity provider(IdP) for SaaS applications, such as Microsoft Office 365.
Check for updates	Ensure you are using the most recent template before continuing. This template is v1.0.0. Check for newer community versions online at DevCentral (https://devcentral.f5.com/codeshare/Topic/iapps) and newer supported versions at the main F5 download site (https://downloads.f5.com/esd/), with instructions at the AskF5 Knowledge Base (http://support.f5.com/kb/en-us/solutions/public/13000/400/sol13422.html).
Software Support	This iApp supports configuring BIG-IP APM 11.4.0 or later as SAML IDP to SaaS Applications.
Prerequisites	Before using this iApp you must ensure that the following prerequisites are met: Create service provider (SP) connectors by importing metadata exported from each SaaS application you intend to authenticate users. Ensure that your Active Directory server is properly configured and all clients have the appropriate credentials to access SaaS environments. Ensure that DNS and NTP servers are properly configured on the BIG-IP system. See the deployment guide or BIG-IP documentation for instructions. To process encrypted traffic on this BIG-IP system, you need to import an SSL certificate and key that correspond to all fully-qualified DNS names that you are using for the traffic. Importing SSL certificates and keys is not a part of this template; see Local Traffic >> SSL Certificate List. This template can make use of existing route domains. Creating route domains is not part of this template; see Network >> Route Domains. To ensure a successful deployment, F5 strongly recommends following the instructions in the Deployment Guide at http://www.f5.com/pdf/deployment-guides/microsoft-office-365-saml-idp-dg.pdf .

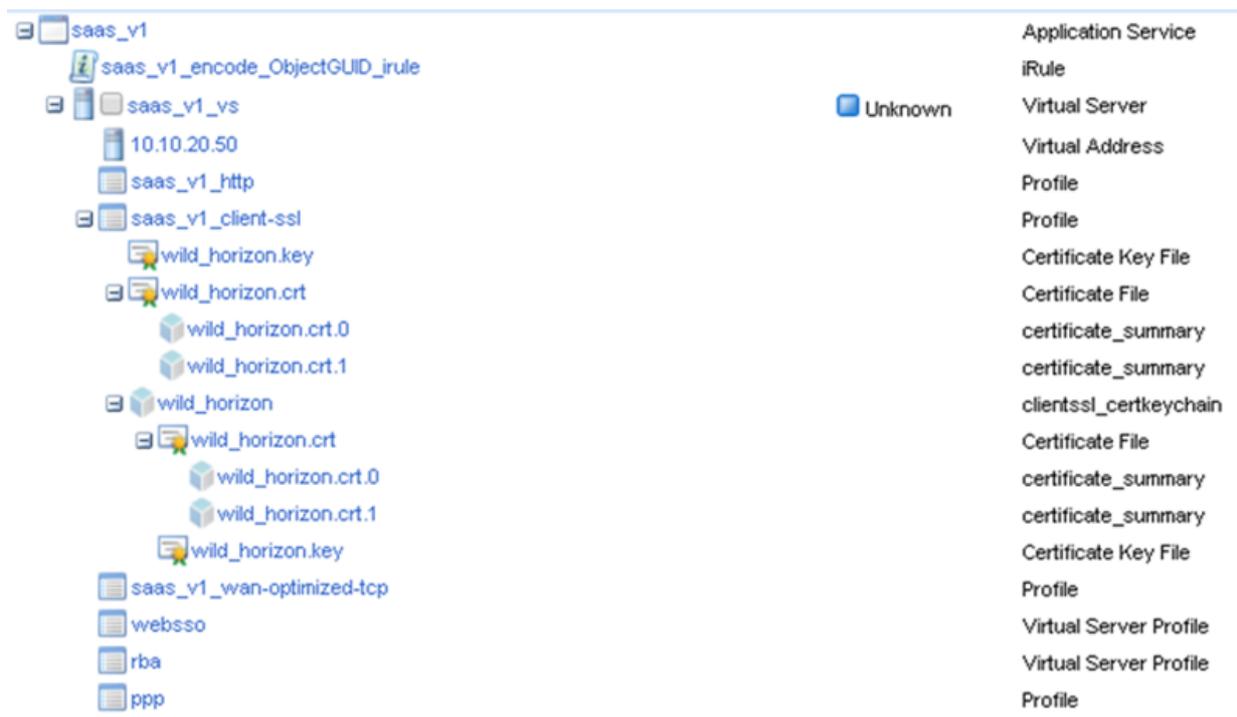
Template Options

Do you want to see inline help?	Yes, show inline help
This template offers extensive inline assistance, notes, and configuration tips. We strongly recommend reading all information presented in the template until you are familiar with the functionality and implications of the deployment options. Important notes and warnings are always visible, no matter which selection you make here.	
Which configuration mode do you want to use?	Basic - Use F5's recommended settings
This template supports two configuration modes. Basic mode automatically configures the BIG-IP system with F5 recommended settings without user intervention. Advanced mode allows you to review and edit the F5 recommended settings before configuring the system.	

SaaS Applications

Which SaaS application (and SP Connector) are you using? Add	Application	New federation relationship with Office 365	SP	Office 365	Display Name	Office 365	IdP Initiated?	No
	Application	New federation relationship with Box	SP	Office 365	Display Name	Box Files	IdP Initiated?	No
	Application	New federation relationship with Amazon Web	SP	Office 365	Display Name	AWS	IdP Initiated?	No

UI configurations for the SaaS iApp



Summary of configurations for the SaaS iApp

So if you need quick and easy way to deploy your applications, look no further than F5 iApps. You can use the F5 built iApps, you can customize F5 built iApps or you can build your own iApps. Your applications, infrastructure and business will thank you.

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