

F5-Oracle solutions that
work right out of the box?

Brilliant!

Partnership delivering on
the promise of availability,
performance, and security.

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Photograph by Robert Houser

Think for a moment about your company's mission-critical applications. Now quietly say the words "high performance, high availability, security." The great feeling washing over you is called IT peace of mind.

Ultimately that feeling is the promise of the unique partnership between F5 Networks and Oracle, particularly for companies rethinking their application delivery strategies in the emerging world of service-oriented architecture, or SOA.

To deliver on this promise, F5 and Oracle began working together six years ago to offer users superb availability, security, and performance for Oracle's 100% Internet-enabled enterprise software. Today the fruits of that labor include validating the interoperability of F5's BIG-IP solution with Oracle applications (including E-Business Suite 11i) and many Oracle Fusion Middleware solutions (including Oracle Application Server 10g and Oracle Identity Management Suite).



From left: Mike Schrock, who manages the Oracle relationship at F5; Milan Thanawala, Oracle's director of business development; and Amit Jasuja, vice president of Oracle Security and Identity Management.

According to Rick Schultz, vice president of Oracle Fusion Middleware, one major driver for the F5-Oracle relationship is users' need to integrate disparate silos of applications such as ERP, order entry, and CRM. To do so, they need a standards-based approach. "That's what SOA can deliver for them," Schultz notes. Oracle Fusion Middleware, he says, is in the thick of this integration effort.

Middleware the destination

"In fact, middleware is the first tier users hit when entering the network to get their jobs done," adds Amit Jasuja, vice president of Oracle Security and Identity Management. "Performance and availability are critical. And with the numbers of people coming from so many different places inside and outside the company to access the network, security is a must."

To compound this challenge, Jasuja notes, there are essential differences between traffic in an SOA environment and in a traditional network: "SOA traffic is bulky, with lots of data traveling from node to node. If the network is not first optimized for this bulky, chatty data, performance is going to suffer badly."

Enter F5, with solutions such as BIG-IP Local Traffic Manager for load balancing and application delivery as

well as FirePass SSL VPN for providing highly secure remote access to business applications to users working from home or on the road.

"Customers choose Oracle because they are a technology leader," notes Mike Schrock, who manages the Oracle relationship at F5. "But Oracle can't control the network. Working together, F5 and Oracle can deliver integrated, ready-to-use solutions that help customers gain control over how their Oracle applications are delivered over the network. We can also help customers scale their applications globally while delivering high availability and security by virtualizing all the infrastructure. When necessary, we can inspect all the payloads and control application access so all solutions remain secure."

Flexible solutions

Milan Thanawala, Oracle's director of business development, says that BIG-IP, FirePass, and other F5 solutions help provide Oracle customers with tremendous flexibility in selecting just the right architecture for a specific deployment. In turn, the F5-Oracle relationship delivers value for customers beyond pure technology, easing the burden of disparate network, security, and applications groups often found in the enterprise. Despite the need for

Application access made easy Down Under

A major Australian education department faced a conundrum. It wanted to give greater access to its broad range of corporate applications to more than one million students, teachers, and staff. But security concerns stood in the way. In addition, many of the department's legacy applications simply were not accessible over the Internet, because they had been developed largely for LAN access. If you weren't hard-wired to the LAN, you were out of luck.

A solution from F5 and Oracle solved the department's problem—and with startling ease, virtually out of the box. Using a combination of F5 FirePass SSL VPN appliances working in tandem with an Oracle portal solution, the department got just what it wanted while averting the messy and costly process of having to rewrite the applications for Internet access.

Specifically, FirePass permits remote users to log into the portal with a web browser for virtually all corporate applications and services, and to do so with the comprehensive security FirePass offers. The department also has pressed into service F5's BIG-IP devices across its network to optimize performance and availability, and F5's iRules are helping it develop customizable commands that integrate with various network components. To read more about this joint F5-Oracle deployment, visit www.f5.com/solutions/success/australia_edu_ss.html.

these three groups to collaborate effectively prior to major new application deployments, as Schrock observes, the reality is that they usually do not. F5-Oracle solutions help to bridge the gap between these groups by integrating the application with the network in a way that delivers the required routing, reliability, security, and performance in today's web-centric application architectures.

The F5-Oracle solutions come pre-integrated, assuring the network will handle cur-

rent loads and also be able to scale for growth.

"For Oracle, F5 has been a great partner," says Thanawala. "They help educate customers about Oracle solutions. Gartner has recognized them for their Application Delivery Networking excellence. They are an established network provider. And they have lots of customer touch-points with our joint engagements. Together we're delivering complete solutions customers know will work right out of the box." *

WHAT'S GOOD FOR THE GOOSE...

Oracle isn't just an F5 technology partner; they are an F5 customer as well. They have deployed nearly 100 BIG-IP devices in front of more than 5,300 application cluster environments in three data centers around the world.

According to Leonid Stavnitser, Oracle's senior manager for Global IT, "These BIG-IPs help Oracle Global IT maintain optimal availability, performance, and security for business-critical applications. Combined with the Oracle Database Grid, application server clusters enable Global IT to deliver

a true virtual data center environment. This also reduces provisioning time for new applications, and it's seamless for the end user's system maintenance and for leveraging low-cost Linux servers. The success of this new architecture allowed Oracle GIT to extend its usage to Oracle OnDemand, so our hosted customers can enjoy the benefits."

Oracle realized significant ROI on integrating F5 technology into its infrastructure. Migration to the inexpensive Linux clusters and the consolidation of hardware resources that followed, as well as provisioning and administration automation, saved the company millions of dollars.