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Leon Faazen, IT Team Leader, transavia.com

European Airline Accelerates Online Transactions with F5 Solution

For the budget airline **transavia.com**, a fast and reliable website is absolutely critical. More than 70 percent of the company’s revenues stem from online transactions, and customers need to be able to find and book flights online at any time of the day or night.

Following the installation of F5® BIG-IP® Application Delivery Controllers, transavia.com has experienced a 25 percent increase in the speed of its online booking system and enhanced the reliability of this vital business application.

Business Challenges

The Dutch company transavia.com operates in the highly competitive airline industry. It offers low-cost charter flights and scheduled flights to summer and winter holiday destinations, operating from airports throughout the Netherlands. Most of its revenues stem from online transactions, and its transavia.com website handles more than 80,000 visits every hour. The reliability and performance of the transavia.com online booking application is, therefore, of paramount importance to the company.

“If our website is down, we cannot be sure that a customer will come back later. Therefore, any downtime in our website could result in a loss of revenues,” explains Leon Faazen, IT Team Leader at transavia.com.

Until recently, the transavia.com online booking application was hosted by a third-party organisation. This arrangement delivered an acceptable level of website performance, but it wasn’t always easy for transavia.com to make software upgrades and changes. The company, therefore, decided to bring its booking application partly back in-house to give it greater control over the development of its online systems and to reduce costs.

Solution

With two data centres, located 10 kilometres apart, transavia.com wanted to deploy a load balancing solution to share its website traffic, still provided by a third-party, and transactions across a redundant enterprise

Overview

Industry

Airline

Challenges

- Bring online transactional apps partly in-house
- Deliver a fast, high-quality online service for customers
- Ensure the reliability of the website

Solution

- BIG-IP® Local Traffic Manager™

Benefits

- 25% increase in the speed of online transactions
- 33% reduction in time required for page loads
- Improved customer experience online
- Scalability to cope with peaks in traffic
- High availability for critical business apps



server bus (ESB) solution at these two sites. The company discussed its requirements with Pinewood, its long-term IT supplier, and Pinewood recommended F5 BIG-IP products. "Pinewood has been a reliable IT supplier to transavia.com for almost 20 years," says Reda Saad, Project Manager at transavia.com. "We were therefore happy to accept Pinewood's advice."

After speaking with F5, transavia.com opted for two BIG-IP 3900 devices, each operating the BIG-IP Local Traffic Manager (LTM) module. It then drew up an ambitious project schedule, with the aim of going live with the F5 products in just one month, by the end of February. Spring and summer are the busiest trading periods for transavia.com, so it was important for the business to get its web applications running in-house as quickly as possible.

Pinewood helped transavia.com to collect its business requirements, create a technical design, and test the F5 products before deploying one in each of the two data centres. "We carried out comprehensive load testing prior to going live and these tests all went well," recalls Faazen. "Pinewood understood what we wanted to achieve and were very experienced with the F5 products. This enabled us to achieve our deadline and install the products in one month."

Benefits

Since moving parts of its online booking system in-house, transavia.com has experienced a dramatic improvement in the speed of online transactions, which it attributes to the use of F5 solutions. "The website is 25 percent faster than before," says Faazen. "We can handle more transactions in a minute than in the past and page loads have reduced in time by a third, from three seconds to two seconds."

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The improved speed of the website helps the company to provide a higher quality experience for its online customers. In addition, when information displays quickly, more visitors to the website are likely to purchase tickets, so transavia.com has the potential to increase its bookings.

Critically, BIG-IP Local Traffic Manager ensures that the company's online transactional systems are highly available. Both of the BIG-IP LTM devices are active 24/7 and seamlessly balance web traffic across all available web servers on each site. Should a disaster occur at one data centre, BIG-IP LTM would automatically and instantly divert all traffic to the remaining data centre, enabling the business to continue to make sales, unaffected by the incident.

The high availability and scalability of BIG-IP LTM enables transavia.com to cope effortlessly with any unexpected and planned increases in traffic. There is, therefore, very little risk of the company's booking system becoming overloaded and failing during peak seasons and advertising campaigns, for example.

By terminating the contract with its third-party outsourcing partner, transavia.com has both saved money and gained greater control over its online applications. Now, when software changes are required, the

company's IT team can make these more easily and as often as it wants. Technicians in the data centres find it easy to manage and configure the BIG-IP devices and take advantage of F5's flexible iRules® programming language to customise functions.

The flexibility of the F5 products has enabled transavia.com to gain added benefits from their use—benefits that were not originally anticipated. For example, the company now uses its BIG-IP devices to balance its email traffic, too. By sharing the load across multiple computers running Microsoft Exchange Server over two sites, the BIG-IP products improve the efficiency, reliability, and speed of this core business system.

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