EXCELIANCE

RULE YOUR NETWORK!®

SdV Plurimédia relies on Exceliance to ensure continuity and quality of service at its customers' online press sites.

The specialist in value-added hosting services for online press sites has deployed ALOHA Load Balancer to ensure availability, improve performance, and manage peak traffic for its very high-volume Web sites. The features/quality/price ratio of the solution, its capacity to be implemented on legacy servers, and its upgradeable architecture convinced SdV Plurimédia.

Project Overview

Customer:
SdV Plurimédia

Group:
Subsidiary of the Hersant Média Group

Business sector:
Value-added hosting services
for press Web sites

Head Office:
Strasbourg (67), France

Customer Requirements:
- Replace Alteon load balancers following the liquidation of Nortel Networks
- Obtain a reliable long term, scalable, and upgradable load balancing solution
- Leverage the existing server infrastructure

Chosen Solution:
ALOHA Load Balancer on SSD

Value-added hosting services for press Web sites

SdV Plurimédia was a Minitel pioneer in the 1980s. But the company was quick to catch the Internet wave and offers its customers high value-added services for Web sites with tight constraints regarding traffic volumes, availability, and security.

This expertise enabled the company to launch the very first online newspaper in French, and SdV Plurimédia has gone on to develop several other sites for major French press groups.

In addition to hosting press sites, the company offers other more specialized services such as support for its customers' advertising units. Today SdV Plurimédia partners include Le Figaro, Les Échos, Le Monde Interactif, Arte, France Télévisions, ParuVendu, etc.

Replacing the installed base of load balancers

In 1996 SdV Plurimédia installed Nortel Alteon load balancers in order to offer fluid browsing in all circumstances to its customers—and particularly Internet users—even during peak traffic periods related to major events. The solution evolved over the next 15 years until Radware acquired the Alteon business following the bankruptcy of Nortel Networks. But Radware could not offer a clear response concerning the long-term future of the product. "Our specifications were very simple," said Salim Gasmi, Technical Director of SdV Plurimédia. *"We wanted a load balancer and nothing but a load balancer."*

All the solutions studied offered the required features: load balancing at layers 4 (network) and 7 (application), high performance, and support of IPV6. However, the ALOHA Load Balancer offered three key advantages: it was much less expensive than the other solutions, it was based on open source software (a Linux kernel and the HAProxy load balancing solution), and it could be installed on legacy Tyan servers thanks to its SSD distribution mode (a simple software license with no appliances). *"Our contacts were both responsive and competent, notably Willy Tarreau, who helped develop the Linux 2.4 kernel as well as HAProxy. Finally, the fact that Exceliance is a French company was an important factor,"* said Salim Gasmi.

2 to 10 Gbits of traffic per second

In less than three months, models and tests provided the architecture required to meet the needs of SdV Plurimédia customers. Their Web traffic varies between 2 and 10 Gbits per second, with over 1,000 servers and several million pages viewed per day. The system includes a cluster of 5 load balancing servers, including 4 for production and 1 for backup, all mutually secured and located in multiple data centers.

Since the company installed ALOHA Load Balancer in October 2010, servers are running at an average load of 20% of capacity; they can easily absorb traffic peaks generated by major national or international events. Although the solution may appear over-dimensioned today, it can easily be expanded if necessary: in order to increase the capacity of the load balancing cluster, the company must simply add a server and purchase a new ALOHA license.

"With the new ALOHA architecture, we maintain the performance of our previous tools at a far lower price. More importantly, we have the guarantees provided by a long-term solution based on an open source distribution," said Salim Gasmi.

Project Summary

Description

SdV Plurimédia, the value-added hosting services provider, has used Exceliance solutions since October 2010 to ensure availability, manage traffic peaks, and improve the performance of its customers' online press sites.

Challenges

- Ensure availability and improve the performance of sites with major constraints regarding traffic, availability, and security

- Benefit from a scalable, upgradeable, and long-term solution offering a good price/quality ratio

- Leverage the existing server infrastructure

Key Benefits

- 20% average load on servers, enabling the system to easily absorb the traffic peaks generated by special events

- Recycle the legacy Tyan servers as load balancers (ALOHA version embedded on SSD)

- Ensure the sustainability of the investment thanks to a solution based on open source software

EXCELIANCE — *RULE YOUR NETWORK!®*

Exceliance markets a range of high availability and load balancing solutions to improve performance, ensure availability, and optimize the infrastructure of mission-critical applications (Web, DBMS, email, Terminal Server, ERP, etc.).

Initially developed using the HAProxy open source load balancing program, ALOHA (Application Level Optimization & High Availability) solutions optimize networks and application flows.

Exceliance, based in Jouy-en-Josas outside Paris, has attracted leading corporations in banking, retail, utilities, ecommerce, and the public sector. Its solutions are also used by numerous hosting service providers.