



“F5 products give us much greater confidence in our ability to protect our customers’ information.”

Darren Bounds
Information Security Officer
Vurv Technology

Vurv Technology Streamlines Hosting Environment and Enhances Security with BIG-IP LTM 8400 and Application Security Manager

Industry

Software Manufacturer

Challenges

- Simplify hosting environment
- Simplify and optimize security environment

Solution

BIG-IP Local Traffic Manager (LTM) 8400
BIG-IP Application Security Manager (ASM)

Benefits

- Streamlined, efficient hosting environment
- Simplified security environment
- Better application performance
- Awareness of security attacks as high as 95%

Summary

Vurv Technology provides companies of all sizes with on-demand talent management solutions for recruitment, onboarding, performance, and compensation management. With more than 2.5 million users accessing Vurv’s web-based applications worldwide, traffic management and security are top concerns. That’s why Vurv uses F5 Networks’ BIG-IP® Local Traffic Manager 8400 with Application Security Manager to ensure high performance and defend against intrusion.

Challenge

Vurv products include solutions for talent management, recruitment, onboarding, performance management, compensation planning, and more. Its customers include more than 300 large enterprises as well as more than 1,400 small and mid-sized organizations.

In recent years, Vurv has experienced enormous growth—a trend that is expected to continue. In light of this growth, the company began an in-depth evaluation of the architectural components of its hosting environment. Vurv products and services are primarily based on a SaaS (Software as a Service) model. For example, Vurv Recruit, geared towards attracting, hiring, and

retaining top talent, provides capabilities and features such as web-based templates and workflow engines for facilitating hiring processes, sourcing candidates, and searching talent databases and job boards. In most situations, Vurv hosts the web-based applications it offers to its customers on its own servers.

Darren Bounds, Information Security Officer at Vurv, explains that achieving optimal efficiency and security were primary goals of the architectural evaluation. “We wanted to ensure we were supporting our customers in the most efficient way possible at the lowest cost. This meant creating an architecture that could scale to support more users with fewer resources,” said Bounds. He also explains the security objective: “Our reputation is largely based on the functionality and the security and integrity of our products. The traditional intrusion detection and prevention systems we have in place provide insight into attacks at the network and host level, but we needed a technology that could analyze and understand our web applications and how they’re used at a more granular level, provide protection at the application layer, and defend against known and unknown attacks.”



Solution

As a result of its architectural evaluation, Vurv decided to implement F5 Networks' BIG-IP Local Traffic Manager (LTM) 8400 to manage and load balance web traffic to the company's servers to achieve higher efficiency. Two BIG-IP LTM 8400s sit in front of a web farm of static and dynamic content servers, and all of Vurv's applications sit inside of this web farm. In addition, all of the company's SSL traffic is offloaded to the BIG-IP devices. "This enables us to manage all of our SSL certificates on the BIG-IP LTM 8400s instead of on individual web and application servers," said Bounds. "We are also able to significantly reduce the number of individual IP addresses we have to support because BIG-IP LTM enables us to rely on host headers instead of IP-based virtual hosts."

In addition, Vurv uses F5's iRules technology—customizable commands that give IT departments complete and granular control over application traffic—to differentiate between static and dynamic content and route it to the appropriate web or application server.

Vurv also considered a range of application security technologies. "Most of the products we looked at were signature-based," said Bounds. "But we wanted to take a different approach—one that would give us more flexibility and better results by allowing us to create a white list of traffic types and behavior that we know is good, and block everything else. F5's [BIG-IP] ASM delivers that functionality." Bounds also notes that it made sense for Vurv to use BIG-IP Application Security Manager

(ASM), "because we were implementing F5 technology already, which meant that ASM allowed us to capitalize on this investment by implementing a web application firewall as a module to existing infrastructure rather than adding an additional layer of network hardware devices." BIG-IP ASM runs on the BIG-IP Application Delivery Networking platform, integrating with existing F5 technology so that companies don't have to buy, install, and maintain additional hardware.

Benefits

Since implementing BIG-IP LTM 8400 with Application Security Manager, Vurv experienced higher efficiency among its IT staff, simplified its security environment, and achieved better visibility into its web application security.

Streamlined, Efficient Hosting Environment

"In our old environment, each customer had their own IP addresses," said Bounds. "It was more complicated than necessary and quite expensive to manage." The ability of BIG-IP LTM 8400 to use host headers instead of IP addresses enables Vurv to "share a single IP address among multiple customers who are using a specific version of one of our products." Bounds notes that this functionality has enabled the company to dramatically reduce their IP address allocation and management requirements. "This allows us to free up staff time so that we can focus on more strategic initiatives," he said. "In general, it's made understanding and administering our infrastructure significantly easier."

Simplified Security Environment

The reduction in IP addresses also has a positive impact on Vurv security. "With the reduced surface area for attack, we're able to redefine our focus and use our time more effectively," said Bounds. "[BIG-IP] ASM also results in reduced administrative overhead because there are fewer devices to maintain and less training involved. [BIG-IP] ASM has a similar look and feel to the other areas of the BIG-IP LTM 8400 interface, so it's easier to transition administrators between the two environments."

Another significant reduction in administrative overhead comes from terminating and decrypting SSL traffic on BIG-IP LTM 8400. "All of our traffic is encrypted, and because we're terminating, decrypting, and inspecting it all on BIG-IP LTM 8400 with ASM, we don't have to manage SSL certificates in multiple locations. This also enabled us to increase traffic visibility without negatively impacting security," said Bounds.

Better Application Performance

Had Vurv gone with a security solution that required additional infrastructure, "We would have had to pass our web traffic through more hardware components which would have added latency and a reduction in the performance of our applications," said Bounds. "Instead, we were able to take advantage of existing F5 infrastructure and analyze it through a device—BIG-IP LTM 8400—that was already in place."



In addition, the SSL offload capability of BIG-IP LTM 8400 helps to improve the performance of Vurv's application servers.

Awareness of Security Attacks as High as 95%

"BIG-IP ASM gives us improved visibility into attacks against our organization," said Bounds. "ASM provides an additional layer of detection capable of alerting us to around 90–95% of traditional web application attack types. Because of the fact that we're able to apply a white list, we can be even more confident in the integrity of our applications. F5 products give us much greater confidence in our ability to protect our customers' information."

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