

# Easyjet refreshes application delivery networking platform

[Business](#)



Overview easyJet was one of the first airlines to embrace the opportunity of the Internet when it sold its first seat online in April 1998. Today, approximately 98% of all its seats are sold over the Internet, making easyJet one of Europe's biggest Airlines and Internet retailers.

.. In August 2005, as part of its ongoing policy to refresh technology, the company decided to upgrade its web platform architecture in order to maintain its exceptionally high availability. The re-architecting of the web site infrastructure to two facilities in Docklands and Reading also prompted the deployment of additional VPN access for technical support staff. As a long-standing F5 customer, easyJet upgraded to a fully redundant pair of F5 BIG-IP 6400 products to support the 32 web servers across both facilities. In addition, easyJet deployed two FirePass SSL VPN 4100s to provide support staff with secure remote access to its infrastructure for performing routine maintenance and fault resolution.

The technology refresh is helping easyJet maintain its 100% availability for its online website, which processes around 40Mbps of customer transactions, effectively filling an airplane every 20 seconds at peak times. The new hardware is running substantially below capacity, providing easyJet with scope for future growth. Challenge easyJet was founded in 1995 by entrepreneur Stelios Haji-Ioannou with a simple mission statement that would revolutionise the European airline industry. The goal was to provide its customers with safe, high value, point-to-point air services. To reduce costs, easyJet eliminated the unnecessary costs and 'frills', which characterise 'traditional' airlines as well as using technology such as the Internet. In the intervening decade, easyJet has grown to become one of the largest

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European short haul airlines, with 112 planes servicing 65 airports with annual revenues approaching of ? 1.

5bn as of February 2006. To support one of Europe's busiest websites, easyJet developed a highly scalable and redundant architecture with multiple sites and connectivity paths to ensure availability and business continuity. Prompted by a move to new hosted facilities, senior managers at easyJet decided to refresh the existing web platform architecture." We have been using the BIG-IP technology for around 5 years now and the 5000 series served us well," said Andy Caddy, IT manager for easyJet, " Although as a company, we regularly re-evaluate our technology platform with the aim of maintaining our exceptionally high availability and website performance." The easyJet website books flights for over 28 million people every year as well as processing millions of inquiries. To service this load, the infrastructure uses 2 separate sites each consisting of 16 web application servers fronted by a pair of BIG-IP application delivery networking systems.

With the move to a new hosted data center provider, the opportunity to refresh the BIG-IP system emerged as Caddy explained: " We did briefly look at other vendors but we have been very satisfied with the performance of our F5 solution. Our in-house team had also built a strong understanding of the BIG-IP platform and features, and the BIG-IP 6400 promised to deliver more of the same with room to grow as our operations expand. There was no real reason to move away from BIG-IP." To allow secure access to its hosted web servers, easyJet needed a VPN solution." We required a solution that provided clientless VPN access as we may need to provide secure access to

third parties and having them maintain a local access client is problematic,” Caddy said.

“ We evaluated several products but only FirePass met all our criteria and our good past experiences with F5 gave us an additional level of confidence. We also prefer to maintain a small number of suppliers, so it was a perfect fit for us,” Caddy added. SolutionThe implementation of the new BIG-IP 6400 systems was straightforward, with a simple sequential switch-over of each site at two separate geographical locations to maintain availability for customers. With the new hosted location up and running, a FirePass 4100 at each site allows easyJet IT staff and third party consultants to securely access the infrastructure remotely from any web based terminal for routine maintenance and troubleshooting. The implementation was an uneventful and smooth transition as Dan Hall, easyJet lead technical architect comments, “ Our architecture is pretty straight forward and designed to deliver our online applications with exceptional availability and performance to our customers.”” Our platform architecture has evolved over the last few years but always with the goal to maintain the availability which since the last refresh has been 100%.”” The new BIG-IP provides us with more features, allowing us to further improve performance while giving us the option to add modular upgrades if it is deemed necessary for our future business needs,” Hall added.