



vAPV CASE STUDY

Needham Bank

vAPV virtual application delivery controller helps ensure continuous uptime for email, SharePoint and other critical business applications while assuring performance.

Background

Massachusetts-based Needham Bank has been providing commercial and consumer financial products since 1892. Since 2007, the bank has experienced 20 to 30% year-over-year growth in both employees and assets, added several new branches, and has established itself as a leader in community banking by striving to be accessible, uncomplicated, and approachable.

The bank has also invested in developing new service lines and product offerings to serve its diverse clientele. The goal is to provide the best of all worlds – big bank-like products delivered with community bank values and service.

Industry

Banking & Financial Services

Challenges

High growth rate in employee head counts, new services and offerings, and new branches

Strong focus on impeccable customer service required near five 9s availability of business applications

SharePoint in particular had higher-than-desired downtime

Solution

Array Networks vAPV for server load balancing

Integrated application acceleration with caching, compression and TCP connection multiplexing

Benefits

Business application downtime (including SharePoint) reduced for improved availability

Performance and throughput improved through application acceleration, caching, compression and TCP connection multiplexing

Routine application maintenance can be performed during regular business hours with little impact on performance

Flexible, easy configuration allows changes on the fly as conditions and requirements change

Challenges

Needham Bank's fast growth and high focus on exceptional customer service presented unique demands and challenges for the bank's IT team. In order to provide concierge-like service levels to its clientele, business applications like email, SharePoint 2010, remote desktop access for after-hours network access and others need to have nearly five 9s availability, coupled with high performance to assure the highest-possible user experience. In particular, the IT staff was noticing more downtime in the SharePoint servers than was desirable.

However, the existing network infrastructure did not include load balancing or application delivery controller (ADC) products to mitigate downtime and assure performance. As the company grew, it became evident to the IT staff that an ADC could help ensure performance and availability. In addition, the company was in the process of virtualizing much of its network infrastructure. A virtual ADC became the solution of choice.

Solution and Results

Needham Bank had a longstanding relationship with Array Networks, and had previously deployed the company's SSL VPN secure access gateways and DesktopDirect, Array's remote desktop access solution. Using DesktopDirect, bank employees are able to use their existing single sign-on credentials to remotely log into their office PCs from any device – a home PC and browser, or personal iPhone or iPad, for example.

"We've had a great relationship with Array," said James Gordon, Needham Bank's senior vice president of IT and CIO. That relationship, coupled with the bank's experience with Array's secure access gateways and DesktopDirect, made the choice a "non-issue," he said, when choosing a virtual ADC appliance. The IT team chose Array's

vAPV virtual application delivery controller for their load balancing needs.

"[The vAPV] was ridiculously easy to deploy," said Gordon. "All we had to do was spin it up and perform some light configuration on it. Basically it was 'set it and forget it!'"

The IT team noticed multiple benefits from the vAPV virtual appliance, including no degradation in performance of the business applications. Currently the team is splitting user access across two SharePoint servers. Gordon noted, "we can further divide across other servers with very little effort."

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James Gordon
Sr. Vice President of IT and CIO, Needham Bank

In addition, with the vAPV in place, the IT team can reboot servers without service disruption, and can even perform software patches during regular business hours without impact.

"[The vAPV] does what it's supposed to. It just works," said Gordon. "We're very happy overall."

Summary

In a challenging environment of high growth and expansion to new markets, coupled with new demands, new service lines and new offerings, as well as a strong focus on impeccable customer service, Needham Bank's IT department needed

to ensure performance and availability of critical business applications.

Through Array's vAPV virtual application delivery controller, Needham Bank has found the performance, flexibility and agility needed to continuously deliver five 9s availability, with smooth reliable performance to support the bank's growth and customer relations.

