CommuniGate
SYSTEMS

INDUSTRY

MegaPath Networks Inc. is a business-class broadband access and network services provider that supplies high-speed access to the Internet and private networks, as well as network security, remote access, e-mail, eCommerce and Web site solutions. MegaPath currently serves small, mid-sized and home-based businesses, as well as enterprise telecommuter markets and distributed enterprises in 150 metropolitan areas nationwide.

Communigate Pro at Megapath—
Reliable Solution For Future Growth

CHALLENGE

Sean P. Crandall has mega plans for his messaging services. The VP of Engineering at MegaPath currently supports over 3100 domains, a large system by anyone's standards. The system currently handles approximately 1.5M POP requests and moves 250,000 email messages per day. But Crandall must look at growth potential way beyond that, to meet current system requirements and allow for future expansion. He reports "we were looking for a solution that would take us to the multi-million mail box number."

SOLUTION

Like many cost conscious Service Providers, MegaPath initially tried to keep costs low with an open source e-mail platform. However, they soon realized this was not a viable long-term solution as their business continued to grow. System management problems started occurring and they began having problems with corrupted mailboxes. The system was rapidly becoming very expensive to maintain. Searching for a reliable solution that could support future growth, MegaPath contacted CommuniGate Systems. According to Crandall, they chose CommuniGate Pro for a variety of reasons. But mostly because "It is easy to use and implement. It had all of the features and services already built in that we wanted to offer at the time (POP and SMTP) and all of the features that we were thinking about implementing (web email, IMAP)."

Perhaps most importantly, CommuniGate Pro solved their problems by providing those services on a solid platform. MegaPath is known for a high standard of customer care, which continues to earn top ratings according to industry reviews. The e-mail system also had to meet their high standards.

SYSTEM ARCHITECTURE

The current MegaPath configuration is a multi front-end and multi back-end Dynamic Cluster. The servers are from Dell and run FreeBSD on the front-end and RedHat on the back-end, with a pair of clustered Net App F740's for data storage. In front of the cluster, Foundry ServerIron XL load balancers sit behind four Cisco PIX 525 firewalls. Everything has something to failover to, providing 100% uptime.

As the system grows, they plan to add servers as needed. The CommuniGate Pro Dynamic Cluster architecture allows them to add or remove servers at will, without any disruption to their customers.

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ADMINISTRATION

In addition to the built-in Web-based administration interface, MegaPath used the CLI (command line interface) of CommuniGate Pro to simplify what could have been a complicated process. They created a general Web interface to manage all of the aspects of setting up e-mail for a new customer. By going to one simple interface, an administrator configures the primary DNS servers, secondary DNS servers, and CommuniGate Pro server. The back end scripts take care of doing the work on the servers themselves, saving time and money for the administrative staff.

RESULTS

With its built in IMAP, POP3, SMTP, HTTP, ACAP and LDAP services, CommuniGate Pro allows MegaPath to support whatever their customers want, with the reliability they have come to expect. The customers generally have different requirements based on network and connectivity. In terms of e-mail, many end users are stationary and thus, standard POP accounts work fine for them. Others are "road warriors" and thus need mobile access to their e-mail which the Web interface supports nicely. As new customers come on-board with new sets of requirements, Crandall feels that MegaPath is ready. "At this point, we believe that we have the base to support millions of mailboxes."

ONGOING SUPPORT

In Sean Crandall's opinion, CommuniGate Systems' support has been "excellent."
He enjoys telling this story that "sealed the deal" for them to purchase CommuniGate Pro. "Originally, when we asked about the costs of the service contracts for the software, we were told by CommuniGate Systems that they would not sell it to us because we would not need it. We were thinking that they were crazy or the software must be that good that they were able to be that arrogant. We guessed the latter and have not been disappointed."

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