

Australian Conglomerate Deploys vThunder ADC to Increase Availability and Security of Microsoft Exchange

Company

Wesfarmers Limited

Industry

Retail and Manufacturing

Network Solution

vThunder ADC line of virtual appliances

Critical Issues

- End-of-life solution
- Support nearing expiry

Results

- Cost-effective solution
- Higher Exchange server availability
- Improved security and performance
- Future-proofed environment

“We were easily able to rapidly deploy A10 vThunder ADC as a cost-effective replacement for Microsoft ISA. The range of available features provide a future-proof application delivery platform.”

Chad Hoar,

Team Leader, Service Delivery Information Technology,
Wesfarmers Limited

Wesfarmers is one of Australia's largest companies with operations that include: supermarkets, department stores, home improvement and office supplies; coal production and export; chemicals, energy and fertilisers; and industrial and safety products. Revenue for 2014 was \$A60.18 billion and staff numbered 200,000 plus.

The group's best-known brands are in retail, including household names such as Coles Supermarkets, Target, Kmart, Officeworks and Bunnings Warehouse, the leading retailer of home improvement and outdoor living products in Australia and New Zealand. Coles Supermarkets alone has 765 stores nationwide, and six Bi-Lo Supermarkets, serviced by 100,000 plus staff.

Challenge

Based in Perth, Western Australia, the group's holding company, Wesfarmers Limited, needed to replace a Microsoft Internet Security and Acceleration (ISA) Server 2006. The reverse proxy device, which enabled access to internal websites and an Exchange server, was nearing its end of life and support.

“We needed to update our reverse proxy appliance to the latest technology as support for the incumbent solution was fast approaching end of life,” says Chad Hoar, Team Leader, Service Delivery Information Technology. “We needed a virtual device since we run a VMware virtualised environment. Now we are able to have approximately 250 head office staff rely heavily on web access and receive mobile emails via our vThunder ADC appliance without issue.”

Selection Criteria

In seeking the latest generation of reverse proxy technology, Wesfarmers undertook a careful evaluation process, checking offerings from multiple vendors that included F5, Bluecoat, Riverbed Stingray and Websense. After review, the company chose an A10 Networks® vThunder® virtual appliance.

vThunder ADC provides advanced L4-7 Application Delivery Controller services (including security) and server load balancing. Its features and benefits include rapid deployment, consolidated infrastructure and multiple tenants on a single instance; high-performance with no feature limitations; and the ability to reduce capital and operating expenses.

“We preferred vThunder ADC for its cost-effectiveness, scalability and range of functionality,” Hoar says. “We found A10’s technology to be extremely price competitive and although our immediate need was for a reverse proxy server, vThunder ADC offers additional functionality at no extra cost.”

Solution

Hoar’s team selected the vThunder ADC line to provide expansion capabilities, and since Wesfarmers was already running a VMware virtualised infrastructure, the vThunder ADC fits easily into its ecosystem. No new hardware was required for the implementation, saving both money and resources.

The benefits of vThunder ADC include rapid deployment; consolidated infrastructure and multiple tenants on a single instance; and high-performance with no limitation on A10 available features. Each vThunder ADC virtual appliance includes all available ADC or Carrier Grade Networking (CGN) features, with versions licensed by bandwidth up to 8 Gbps on commodity hardware, or aggregate throughput up to 100 Gbps on A10 Networks Thunder HVA hybrid virtual appliances.

Other advantages include dynamic service chaining, down to tenant and/or workload levels; granular policy enforcement per virtual appliance; support for high density multi-tenancy architecture; and dynamic provisioning and operation. Additionally, vThunder ADC is able to reduce Wesfarmers’ capital expenditure, while also reducing operational costs by allowing more efficient use of resources.

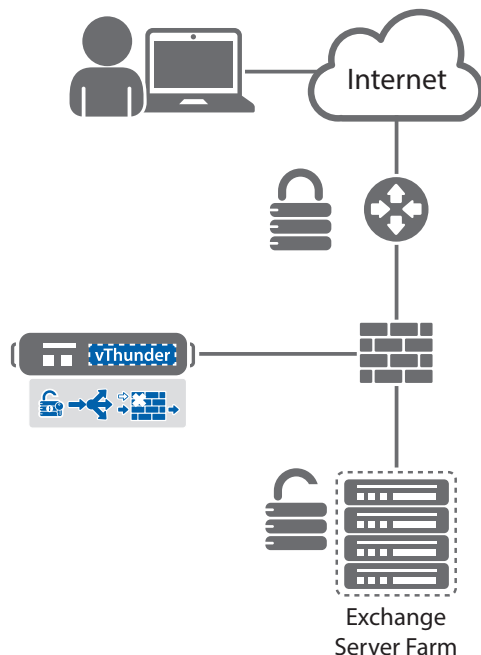


Figure 1: Wesfarmers’ Exchange infrastructure – secured by vThunder ADCs

Results

For Wesfarmers, ease of implementation has been matched by ease of use and reliability, as the vThunder ADC reverse proxy function has delivered set-and-forget standards of performance during the first six months of operation. It sits in front of the Exchange server, providing an external layer of security and ensures the server maintains high levels of availability. In addition, the vThunder ADC secure socket layer (SSL) helps assure email traffic security, performance and offload capabilities, should Wesfarmers wish to adopt it at a later stage.

The vThunder ADC virtual appliance was implemented in each of Wesfarmers’ data centres in Perth and Melbourne, with both Exchange servers and A10 vThunder ADCs running in a VMware virtualised environment. The implementation was quick and problem-free.

“Our selection of A10 Networks vThunder ADC has definitely been justified,” Chad Hoar says. “The device has done everything we needed it to do, and more.”

Success and Next Steps

Wesfarmers is currently only using 5-10% of the vThunder ADC capability, providing huge scalability. If required, the IT team can add servers to the environment without making substantial changes, scaling up without re-architecting. Web Application Firewall (WAF) was also a key decision factor for Wesfarmers.

“Circumstances change and you never know when we might start pushing internal web traffic through,” Hoar says. “Introducing A10 vThunder ADC covered us at the right time. The devices were implemented with three years’ maintenance, and when that period expires we expect to maintain the product. Of course, we will periodically review our environment.”

Additional ready-to-use features include: Global Server Load Balancing (GSLB), with its ability to run Microsoft Lync, SharePoint and other Microsoft products and Application Access Management (AAM). The company is able to utilise the same technology on any other platform, which future-proofs vThunder ADC by allowing IT to add almost any other application.

About Wesfarmers

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About A10 Networks

A10 Networks is a leader in application networking, providing a range of high-performance application networking solutions that help organizations ensure that their data center applications and networks remain highly available, accelerated and secure. Founded in 2004, A10 Networks is based in San Jose, California, and serves customers globally with offices worldwide. For more information, visit: www.a10networks.com

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