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Keith Wingate,  
Senior Network Architect  
Mustang Engineering



## Engineering Firm Boosts Performance of Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007 to Ensure User Satisfaction, Improve ROI



### Industry

Professional Services—Engineering

### Challenges

- Enterprise application performance
- High traffic volumes

### Solution

- BIG-IP® Local Traffic Manager™ (LTM) 6400 with WebAccelerator™ module

### Benefits

- Performance boosted by 60 percent
- Improved ROI for enterprise applications
- Two-thirds reduction in servers used
- Scalable, extensible environment

### Overview

Mustang Engineering ([www.mustangeng.com](http://www.mustangeng.com)) provides services to the oil, gas, chemical, and manufacturing industries. When the company replaced its aging collaboration software with Microsoft® Office SharePoint® Server 2007, it used F5 Networks® BIG-IP® Local Traffic Manager™ 6400 with WebAccelerator™ to boost the application's performance by at least 60 percent. The solution has resulted in rapid employee adoption of the new collaboration environment, and in light of the success, the company plans to extend the solution to other enterprise applications as well.

### Challenges

Knowledge sharing and efficient project management are critical to the success of Mustang Engineering. With headquarters in Houston, Texas, and offices in six other states and three international locations, the company relies on more than 4,000 employees to provide clients with quality design, engineering, and project management.

When the company decided to replace its out-dated intranet and portal collaboration software, it chose Office SharePoint® Server 2007. “We knew that performance can seem cumbersome and slow to the user when there is a heavy load on a SharePoint server,” says Keith Wingate, Senior Network Architect at Mustang. Wingate’s team was well aware that as many as 4,000

users, from national and international remote locations, might be accessing the SharePoint Server 2007 environment at any one time. To ensure that employees take full advantage of the new collaboration environment, Mustang knew it had to ensure top application performance from the outset. “We needed to find something that would ease the performance hit,” Wingate says.

### Solution

With help from Accudata Systems ([www.accudatasystems.com](http://www.accudatasystems.com)), an IT consulting and integration firm, Mustang Engineering identified BIG-IP Local Traffic Manager (LTM) with WebAccelerator as the solution for boosting SharePoint Server 2007 performance.

BIG-IP WebAccelerator is a web application delivery solution that helps organizations overcome performance issues involving browsers, web application platforms, and wide area network (WAN) latency.

In a test development environment at its Houston headquarters, Mustang compared the results of running SharePoint Server 2007 with and without the support of BIG-IP LTM 6400 with WebAccelerator. “The results were compelling,” says Chris Laney, Accudata Systems Account Manager. Accudata Systems had also recently helped Mustang Engineering deploy the F5® BIG-IP Link Controller™ to improve WAN connectivity across the company’s



multiple Internet connections. Wingate says, "It was a combination of our past experience with the BIG-IP Link Controller and these results—which showed a marked performance improvement in SharePoint—that convinced us to go with BIG-IP LTM with WebAccelerator."

In January, 2008, Mustang Engineering deployed SharePoint Server 2007 with two BIG-IP LTM 6400 devices with WebAccelerator sitting in front of the SharePoint servers. At the time of deployment, the company ran a promotional event, which encouraged employees to explore the new intranet to get prizes for finding new features, functionality, and content. Needless to say, this event was successful and it sparked high traffic volumes to the SharePoint servers.

After deployment, Wingate attended an F5 training session for configuring and managing BIG-IP LTM. "It was about the best training I've been to. Afterwards, with some very minor tweaks to BIG-IP, I was able to take advantage of more performance-improving features."

Mustang also relies on F5 Acopia intelligent file virtualization solutions to simplify management and storage of the files associated with the company's more than 5,000 projects—approximately 12 million files. F5 Acopia® ARX® 1000 switches are used by Mustang to efficiently manage files and data on six physical volumes over two Network Appliance clusters, providing users with a single point of access to all shared project files.

#### Benefits

Mustang Engineering successfully deployed and maintains a highly-responsive SharePoint Server 2007

environment with help from F5 Application Delivery Networking products.

#### Performance Boosted by 60 Percent

In its test environment, Mustang witnessed significant SharePoint Server 2007 performance gains over a simulated WAN—without additional hardware or code manipulation. "We saw a 60 percent performance increase in SharePoint after we implemented BIG-IP with WebAccelerator," says Wingate. In the production environment, even with a heavy server load during the SharePoint Server 2007 promotion, Wingate says, "There were no complaints about sluggishness—there were no performance issues."

#### Improved ROI for Enterprise Applications

Mustang keeps its SharePoint Server 2007 users satisfied with fast application performance. "BIG-IP with WebAccelerator is exactly what we needed. Even with lots of traffic to the server, users can have several open sessions within SharePoint and still experience fast performance," says Wingate. The enhanced user experience results in a higher rate of adoption for SharePoint among Mustang employees.

For technology partners, "the benefits are huge," says Laney. "Accudata Systems is seeing a sharp increase in demand for services around SharePoint Server 2007, and as we help our clients plan and implement their SharePoint environments, one of their foremost objectives is to provide a positive user experience. SharePoint is typically a high profile, business critical solution, so performance is key. If users experience slow response times,

they are likely to use the system less or not at all. This can be a major obstacle to achieving a timely ROI on a SharePoint investment. Our ability to walk in the door with F5 gives us a great advantage because we can now address performance issues before they arise."

#### Two-thirds Reduction in Number of Servers Used

With its new application delivery solution, Mustang is able to use fewer servers for SharePoint Server 2007 than originally planned. "After we fully understood the benefits of WebAccelerator, we reduced the number of SharePoint Servers we had planned to use by two-thirds." With efficiency-enhancing features such as Intelligent Browsing Referencing, which eliminates the need for web browsers to download repetitive or duplicate data, and SSL offload which migrates CPU-intensive SSL encryption and decryption from the SharePoint servers to the F5 devices, BIG-IP LTM with WebAccelerator significantly reduces server load and use of bandwidth.

#### Scalable, Extensible Environment

Mustang's new application delivery solution also gives the company room to grow. "In the future," says Wingate, "as we open up our SharePoint environment to customers, demand on our servers will increase. BIG-IP with WebAccelerator will be a great help with that." Wingate also says that Mustang justified the F5 purchase decision because it "also plans to use BIG-IP to improve performance of other enterprise applications, like Microsoft Outlook Web Access and our Citrix servers."

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