

ENTERPRISE R320 Load Balancer from Loadbalancer.org



PRODUCT REVIEW PRODUCT

Application server load balancing was essentially a server upgrade before Application availability and response influenced the economic viability of a business. Inbound application data balancing is now a critical business requirement with high availability inextricably linked. The market offers a range of solutions, but not all can provide top-end performance at an affordable price.

Privately owned British company Loadbalancer.org, specialising for over a decade, offer an impressive range of hardware, virtual and cloud solutions to ensure inbound application data is efficiently handled at a competitive, value for money price, and without performance restrictions.

The ENTERPRISE R320 rack mounted appliance is being reviewed in a cluster configuration. Working as an Active/Passive pair the slave remains idle until it detects failure of the Master, when it assumes full responsibility. Out of the box a basic network configuration wizard gets you connected and then a device configuration wizard navigates the main options.

The R320 is highly configurable, standing apart in the range because of its capacity and resilience. Once configured, further changes and management take place from an intuitive Web User Interface, offering eight high-level nested options. Some configuration choices need to be made at the outset and the most important is whether to manage traffic at Layer-4 or Layer-7. You might select Layer-7 if

you require HTTP Persistence or SSL offloading, but Layer-4 will suit most deployments.

Once configured, a useful system overview using colour categorisation reveals the status of configured services, prompting attention as required. In its default state it displays graphs for network bandwidth, system load and memory usage, but this is configurable.

For the Master/Slave cluster configuration, appliances are connected using RS232, the network, or both. This allows the devices to share Heartbeat information, so that the Slave is up to date and ready for action. Using the Maintenance option, configuration data can be backed up to an XML file.

The R320 has its own firewall offering another line of defence, but it really comes into its own when enhancing load balancing. An example could be the use of Firewall Marks to enable a Layer-4 virtual service listening on multiple ports.

While the appliance must be installed into an already secure network, the R320 offers additional security. For example, using the Maintenance option and the Lockdown wizard, it is possible to secure the appliance by restricting access to IP addresses and Ports that are not operationally required.

As already mentioned, high availability is a significant feature based on three lines of defence: a pair of RAID disks and dual power supplies in each device, combined with the

Master/Slave Cluster resilience.

Loadbalancer.org encourages the purchase of a high availability cluster with a discount. An additional device, ideal for testing or as a cold spare, is offered with a further discount when purchased together. The hardware is replete with a three-year warranty and a four-hour, on-site, hardware response.

Loadbalancer.org demonstrates strong expertise across a range of applications that can benefit from its solutions. For those with Linux expertise, Root access is offered and fully supported through its annual support agreement. Its throughput, independently verified at over 8 Gbps, its quad core processors and optional 10 Gigabit NICs, provide it with plenty of power to balance any TCP or UDP application loads, including Exchange, Apache/IIS, Remote Desktop Services, SharePoint, as well as VoIP, Oracle and Streaming Media.

The technology is impressive and their website is littered with praise which strongly references the Loadbalancer.org culture. A friendly, talented and extremely focused group of people who know their limits as well as their strengths, they have delivered an impressive and affordable appliance, expertly addressing a broad range of business needs. **NC**

Supplier: Loadbalancer.org, Inc.

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