

## Europe Hospitals reduces the risk of application downtime

At this busy hospital group in Belgium, application reliability is of paramount importance. It deployed virtual load balancers from Loadbalancer.org to reduce the risk of application downtime and was soon reaping that and other benefits, including making a key back-end system significantly faster.



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IT Systems Team,  
Europe Hospitals

### Challenge

- Improve the resilience of applications in healthcare environment
- Remove single points of failure

### Solution

- Enterprise VA Max virtual appliances
- 5 year, 24/7 support

### Benefits

- Reduced risk of application downtime
- Business continuity during planned maintenance
- Faster retrieval of system logs
- Simple to configure and use
- 24/7 support on hand, if needed
- Easy online access to documentation and tutorials

## Challenge

Every year, Europe Hospitals carries out more than 340,000 consultations, handles 67,000 emergencies and admits 19,600 patients for in-hospital treatment. Serving the city of Brussels and surrounding areas of Belgium, it comprises two hospitals and two consultation sites and employs 380 specialist physicians and over 1,800 members of staff.

Like most modern healthcare providers, Europe Hospitals was becoming increasingly dependent on IT systems for sharing data, archiving medical imaging files and managing day-to-day operations. It became concerned about the potential impact of a server failure on patient care and decided to improve the resilience of its systems with the addition of load balancing technology.

## Solution

The IT Systems Team at Europe Hospitals, started their search for a load balancer product online. "The first thing we always check is easy access to information," they explained. "We like to be able to find lots of customer examples, tutorials and technical documents on vendors' websites, because this gives us confidence in the product and the vendor."

The IT Systems Team then contacted four shortlisted companies—Loadbalancer.org, Zevenet, FortiADC and Kemp—to request trial versions and obtain further information. From the outset, Loadbalancer.org was the frontrunner. "The technical team at Loadbalancer.org were very positive, attentive and replied promptly to our questions," they recalled. "We felt they really understood the needs of a healthcare provider and took time to understand our unique pain points, before offering tailored advice on how to solve them."



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After thoroughly evaluating the Loadbalancer.org product through their free trial, Europe Hospitals acquired a pair of Loadbalancer virtual appliances and installed them in an active-passive configuration. These virtual appliances are currently supporting four separate applications, including a back-end system for routing medical images, a data archiving system and a VMware Horizon virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) platform. For each of these applications, the Loadbalancer appliances are balancing traffic across up to four servers.

## Benefits

The deployment of load balancers from Loadbalancer has significantly reduced the risk that an unexpected IT outage could disrupt the delivery of patient care. For example, now if a server fails in the medical imagery routing system the load balancer will instantly reroute requests for MRI scans and radiology images to an alternative server, providing a reliable service for the clinicians and staff who treat around 2,500 patients every day.



If the IT team need to carry out routine maintenance on a server, they can now do this without having to arrange planned downtime in the entire system. For example, if an upgrade is required to VMware Horizon servers, this can be achieved without suspending access to the VDI and disrupting the work of 150 members of staff, as well as contractors and partners. "When we have multiple servers and one is down, there is no problem now," the IT Systems Team says.

The installation of load balancers has also led to a significant improvement in the performance of the organization's Graylog application, used to capture, store and retrieve system logs. The Loadbalancer appliances share traffic to this system across four servers, whereas previously there was only one. "System logs can now be retrieved in five seconds, whereas it used to take five minutes...or even time out!" explains the IT Systems Team. "We couldn't have achieved this massive performance improvement without a load balancer."

It didn't take the IT Systems Team long to get up and running with the Loadbalancer products, despite having never used load balancers in the hospital's IT environment before. "We love the simplicity of the product," the team explained. "It is very easy to configure and very flexible."

Europe Hospitals has signed up for 24/7 support from Loadbalancer, but, as yet, hasn't needed to put these services to the test. As the IT Systems Team confidently asserts, "Everything works perfectly."

