



About Liberty Tax Service

Liberty Tax Service is the fastest growing retail tax preparation company in the industry's history, with over 3,200 offices in the United States and Canada. Founded in 1997 by CEO John T. Hewitt, a pioneer in the tax industry, Liberty Tax Service quickly established a reputation for quality computerized tax preparation excellence. The company has prepared over six million individual income tax returns, and strives to set the industry's benchmark for customer service by exceeding its customers' expectations. The Liberty Tax Service franchise opportunity is ranked the #1 tax franchise opportunity on the 2009 Entrepreneur "Franchise 500," and has climbed to #3 overall.



Barracuda Load Balancer 640

Fast Facts:

- Achieves high availability & scalability objectives
- Integrated load-balancing & intrusion prevention
- No per port, per server or per feature license fees
- Advanced load balancing features including direct server return and Layer 7 cookie persistence
- Includes SSL offloading & hardware SSL acceleration



Liberty Tax Service Files for a High Value Load-Balancing Solution with Barracuda Networks

Leading Tax Franchise Stays Online During Busy Tax Season with the Barracuda Load Balancer.

Site downtime is not an option

Liberty Tax Service provides computerized income tax preparation, electronic filing, refund loans, and online filing through eSmart Tax (www.esmarttax.com) for its retail and online customers. For those opting to turn the task over to an experienced tax preparer, franchise owners are available to complete their returns and day-to-day business via Liberty Tax Service's extranet.

Each year, Liberty Tax Service sees the number of online filings increase nearly 20 percent as more individuals opt to file their tax returns online. The amount of traffic to the Liberty Tax Service Web sites has steadily increased, as more individuals visit for information, tips, and to search for a local office. Traffic during tax season, January 1 to April 15, to each of the eight Web sites operated by Liberty Tax Service ranges from one million to three million connections per day.

"We cannot have downtime during tax season," said Jeff Sharp, director of network and communications for Liberty Tax Service. "It is paramount that we have a load-balancing solution with high availability that can manage multiple sites."

High growth rate demands a scalable solution

Liberty Tax Service had a solution in place that proved to be problematic, and could not keep pace with the incremental growth of the business. The company's plans for adding 500 new franchise offices in 2010 pushed the envelope for a replacement load-balancing solution.

"We got to a point where we'd maxed out the capacity of our Radware solution," said Sharp. "It was very expensive to maintain, and without a complete re-write of code, I wasn't going to be able to add any more servers in the background. So we decided to get rid of it and start anew."

Liberty Tax Service was already using the Barracuda Spam & Virus Firewall, and was very satisfied with its value and performance, so further evaluation and consideration of the Barracuda Load Balancer was an obvious choice. Sharp and his team decided to deploy two Barracuda Load Balancer 640s in active/passive configuration mode to meet the network's high availability and future growth needs.

"I don't think we're ever going to hit the limit of what the Barracuda Load Balancer can handle," said Sharp. "We'll be installing additional servers in our Toronto data center this summer, and it won't be a problem at all. That's a relief to us."

Barracuda Networks delivers high value and simplicity

In any competitive market, businesses need to optimize their human assets and infrastructure investments so that they can, in turn, provide that same level of value to their customers. In discovering the Barracuda Load Balancer, Sharp was thrilled with the time and cost efficiencies.

“Barracuda has simplified everything; we set up both boxes ourselves in four hours, and the solution works great for a fraction of what the Radware solution cost. The difference was astronomical.”

-Jeff Sharp,
Network & Communications Director

About the Barracuda Load Balancer

Available in four models, the Barracuda Load Balancer is an affordable, scalable and comprehensive solution for intelligently distributing network traffic across multiple servers. Barracuda Load Balancers support up to 250 servers with no per port or per server licensing fees for ultimate network efficiency. The Barracuda Load Balancer offers network administrators reliability, speed and security with cookie-based session persistence, SSL acceleration and network intrusion prevention. Designed to achieve network flexibility and operational reliability, the Barracuda Load Balancer integrates powerful layer 4 or layer 7 load balancing. To minimize ongoing administration, Barracuda Load Balancers receive hourly Energize Updates delivered automatically by Barracuda Central to provide the most current intrusion prevention definition and security updates.

“Our cost savings were unbelievable,” said Sharp. “With Radware, we paid \$180,000 which included lots of complex settings we didn’t need and would never use. We also spent weeks and \$30,000-to-\$40,000 in consultant fees to get it set up, and it never worked right. Barracuda Networks has simplified everything; we set up both boxes ourselves in 4 hours, and the solution works great for a fraction of what the Radware solution cost. The difference was astronomical.”

The Barracuda Load Balancer is extremely easy to deploy, featuring automatic discovery and configuration tools through an intuitive Web interface. To minimize ongoing administration associated with security, the Barracuda Load Balancer automatically receives current intrusion prevention and security updates from Barracuda Central, an advanced 24/7 security operations center that works to continuously monitor and block the latest Internet threats.

Ease of use is paramount

Five people in Liberty Tax Service’s IT department manage the company’s data center and eight Web properties, while supporting 500 corporate employees in three offices. With that scope of responsibility, having an effective load-balancing solution requiring minimal resources to manage is important, and is now possible with Barracuda Networks. With the capability to quickly add servers or service, as well as features such as health monitoring and automatic discovery, the Barracuda Load Balancer is easy to use.

“Earlier this year our eSmartTax site experienced a slowdown. For about a week, it took five to 10 seconds to navigate from one page to another. It was due to a database issue, and thanks to the Barracuda Load Balancer, we were able to quickly throw in some more Web servers to solve the problem during that time,” said Sharp.

“With Barracuda I do not need to talk with consultants or take servers out so that our development team can make production changes; we can do it in a matter of seconds,” said Sharp. “Overall, I spend 70-to-80 percent less time with the Barracuda Load Balancer, and that frees me up to handle other strategic projects.”

Looking forward, Sharp and his team also plan to implement the Barracuda Link Balancer to load balance the two ISPs they currently utilize.

“It’s a manual failover to the second ISP, so we definitely want to get those in,” said Sharp.

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About Barracuda Networks Inc.

Barracuda Networks Inc. built its reputation as the worldwide leader in content security appliances by offering easy to use and affordable products that protect organizations from email, Web and IM threats. Barracuda Networks has leveraged its success in the security market to offer networking products that improve application delivery and network access as well as world-class solutions for message archiving, backup and data protection. Coca-Cola, FedEx, Harvard University, IBM, L’Oreal, and Europcar, are amongst the 70,000 organizations protecting their networks with Barracuda Networks’ solutions. Barracuda Networks’ success is due to its ability to deliver easy to use, comprehensive solutions that solve the most serious issues facing customer networks without unnecessary add-ons, maintenance, lengthy installations or per user license fees. Barracuda Networks is privately held with its headquarters in Campbell, Calif. Barracuda Networks has offices in 10 international locations and distributors in more than 80 countries worldwide. For more information, please visit www.barracudanetworks.com