Crescendo Networks Accelerates Web Applications for Social Shopping Site Pronto.com

Customer:
> Pronto.com, Inc.

Industry:
> Comparison and Social Shopping Website

Location:
> New York City, New York, U.S.

Crescendo Networks Solution:
> AppBeat™ DC

Results:

- Improved site speed and performance
- Reduced amount of required hardware
- Improved customer experience

Pronto.com is the ultimate place to shop online. With an active community of millions of shoppers, and more than 70 million products, Pronto.com is a fun place to discover unique products and find great deals on everything from electronics and apparel to sporting equipment and home décor.

Create your shopping profile so you can rate and review your favorite products and share advice with like-minded shoppers. Get personalized recommendations and special deals from your favorite brands and stores. Build your wish list so that friends and family know what you want – or stay organized by creating your virtual shopping list – all at Pronto.com

Pronto.com is an operating business of IAC (Nasdaq: IACI), which operates Ask.com, Citysearch, Evite, Match.com, Bloglines, Zwinky, Excite and more.
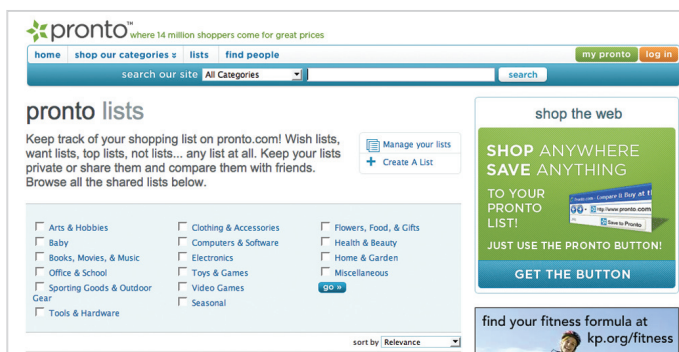
The Challenge

Performance and availability are critical components of any web-based business, and with more than 70,000 Web retailers and 70 million products in its database, those factors are particularly vital to the success of Pronto.com. As the Web's fastest growing comparison and social shopping site, Pronto.com services more than 15 million users each month. To operate such a large infrastructure, Pronto.com relies on hundreds of back-end servers that collect data and push information forward to a thin-layer of front-end servers, which manage search indexes and the site's databases.

"Our online presence and the site's performance are critical elements for our business success. The faster we can deliver search and comparison results to customers, the more likely they are to purchase a product from our partners. This creates a direct correlation between front- and back-end server performance and revenue," noted Tony Casson, director of operations at Pronto.com.

As the business continued to rapidly grow, the company decided it was essential to upgrade load balancing capabilities, as peak traffic hours and other stresses were preventing the site from performing at optimal speeds, thus affecting the customers' experience.

"We happened to be relocating our datacenter and decided that would be an excellent time to also upgrade our load balancers," explained Casson. "We wanted to ensure that as we continue to grow, peak traffic and intense back-end database processing wouldn't interfere with the customer experience. "

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The Solution

Pronto.com decided to conduct a bake-off test between the company's existing traditional load balancers and Crescendo Networks' solution, AppBeat DC. Not only did Crescendo's load balancing features dramatically outperform the traditional technologies, but the product also offered a variety of additional features.

"Not only did AppBeat DC offer superior load balancing capabilities, it offered TCP offload, acceleration and more – features we hadn't realized we needed until we turned them on. We were also impressed by the Crescendo team during the decision process."

Tony Casson, Director of Operations , Pronto.com.

"They took the time to provide us with a concise overview of how the product is built and in what ways it was different from what we already had, which made the decision to choose AppBeat DC that much easier,"continued Casson.

AppBeat DC provides high availability, scalability, acceleration and optimization for Web applications. Unlike competing solutions, AppBeat DC leverages the industry's only purpose-built platform, uniquely designed for maximum performance and feature concurrency. By offloading servers from process-intensive tasks and optimizing the delivery of the application to users, AppBeat DC significantly improves overall application performance, security and availability while reducing datacenter costs.

The Results

Since deploying Crescendo Networks' AppBeat DC, Pronto.com has seen significant improvements in the speed and performance of the site, which has contributed to a considerable increase in revenue for the company.

"AppBeat DC has improved our Web applications and infrastructure in a number of important ways. Not only have our speed and performance been enhanced, but also any overloads we might have experienced in the past are easily mitigated. My favorite thing about the Crescendo solution is that even when we experience heavy loads, application performance remains smooth and flawless, which is important for the customer experience. Our customers can now see search results faster and the site's overall performance is much quicker than our competitors, even during peak traffic, which keeps customers coming back," noted Casson.

AppBeat DC has also allowed Pronto.com to grow into their existing hardware infrastructure without additional purchases. "Before, when we were still working with our existing load balancers, we would have had to continue adding hardware to our infrastructure to support growing traffic. With Crescendo's solution the need for us to purchase new front-line equipment has been cut in half. Each Web server can handle 1.5 times the volume it could before. Furthermore, prior to deploying the Appbeat DC, guaranteeing site uptime during scheduled maintenance was a logistical nightmare requiring far greater amounts of time, personnel and precision. Now we can perform maintenance on our servers without interruption," added Casson.

Additionally, Pronto.com has benefited from continuous communication and support from the Crescendo team. Notes Casson, "We have had an excellent experience working with Crescendo. Not only was the team helpful during the initial purchase and set-up of the product, they continue to be accessible and reliable on a daily basis. I think the company puts a great focus on building lifelong partnerships and relationships with customers, and I am impressed with Crescendo's dedication and determination."

About Crescendo Networks

Crescendo Networks is the recognized performance leader for accelerating and optimizing the delivery of business-critical, web-enabled applications. The company's unique multi-tier application architecture dramatically improves the operation of today's demanding application infrastructure. The world's largest corporations and fastest growing web properties rely on Crescendo for the application performance and efficiency needed to ensure usability, facilitate rapid business growth, lower IT costs and capture additional revenue. To learn more about Crescendo Networks' application delivery solutions, visit www.crescendonetworks.com.