

Array Networks Blog

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Settle For More, Not Less

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Broadcast satellite provider DirecTV last year ran an amusing ad series called "The Settlers" in which a pioneer-style family – complete with log cabin, 19th century clothing and horse-drawn farming equipment – chose cable TV service in order to preserve their values as settlers. Their surrounding neighbors, with modern suburban homes and all the accompanying conveniences, all subscribe to DirecTV of course.

We don't in any way, shape or form intend to equate highly skilled and savvy IT staff members with the simplistic "Settlers" caricature in the ad series. However, enterprise and service provider IT managers for many years have had to make difficult compromises in order to move to agile, software-centric virtualized networks.

Virtualization is great for a large majority of mission-critical applications. Bring VMs up or down, move or reassign them, pretty much meet any requirement, all on the fly. However, network and security virtual appliances, like application delivery controllers, next-gen firewalls, SSL VPNs, application firewalls, and IDS/IPS, are a different story entirely.

They're very compute-intensive, and process thousands if not millions of traffic streams per day or hour. Throwing additional VM compute, memory and I/O resources at them to meet performance objectives just adds cost and complexity (and directly contradicts the benefits of virtualization). To top it off, these appliances utilize software SSL processors for SSL-encrypted traffic, rather than the high-performance hardware SSL resources used by their physical appliance counterparts.

"But wait!" you're probably thinking. "I can just deploy physical appliances instead for these functions." Well, that leads to trade-offs too, unfortunately. You'll lose the nimbleness of virtual appliances, and increase space, power and cooling requirements in order to gain high performance.

In short the choice has been VAs with lower CAPEX, space, power and cooling costs, with high agility but much lower performance, vs. the exact opposite for physical appliances. With either choice, scaling can be a problem. And setting up network functions virtualization (NFV) can be a real headache.

But now, you don't have to compromise.

Array's **AVX Series** is a new breed of appliance, called a network functions platform. It combines the agility of virtualization with the performance of dedicated appliances – think of it as agility at scale – and streamlines NFV set-up.

Choose from a variety of best-of-breed Array and 3rd party networking and security solutions, like application delivery controllers, web application firewalls, DDoS protection, SSL VPN and more. Choose the size instance you wish to use per VA and rest assured that performance is guaranteed through dedicated CPU, memory, I/O and SSL resources per instance. Choose an AVX appliance based on your needs in ¼, ½, or ¾ increments, and expand capacity later as required.

You'll find that you can reduce costs versus either multiple VAs or dedicated appliances by up to half, while getting the performance you need to meet business requirements. You'll reduce rack space, cooling and power requirements by up to a factor of 16 – two rack units versus 32 for 1RU dedicated appliances.

A 3rd-party ecosystem of networking and security solutions that are certified for use with the AVX Series gives you a wide range of choices in best-of-breed products to deploy. Further, you get a streamlined path to NFV – the ArrayOS Resource Manager abstracts the complexity of virtual and physical port mapping, CPU pinning, NUMA boundary settings, SR-IOV and drivers.

You don't have to settle for making the difficult choice between agility and performance. With the AVX Series network functions platform, you can settle for more.

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