



the perfect balance

# KEMP Technologies

Case Study

## Blue Gecko Makes Sites Sticky

### KEMP Technologies LoadMasters Boost Business for ISP Blue Gecko and Its ASP Customers

Seattle-based Blue Gecko ([www.bluegecko.net](http://www.bluegecko.net)) is a hosting and managed solutions provider that delivers the critical infrastructure foundation for its e-commerce customers as well as applications service provider (ASP) clients. The company offers hosting services, including high-availability web services, Oracle, Linux, and Solaris—guaranteeing customers 100% network infrastructure uptime.

## CLIENT: Blue Gecko

### Challenge

In early 2004, Blue Gecko recognized a trend in which more and more customers were asking for load balancing functionality in their hosted environment. The company had been quoting various orders that included load balancing, but they were on a project basis and solutions were not cost-effective enough to be attractive to clients. So the company decided it was time to look at a centralized load balancing solution that would support shared resources so that these services could be offered economically and efficiently.

"We provide hosting to a variety of industries," said Chuck Edwards, managing partner at Blue Gecko. "We're the infrastructure provider to ASPs and other hosting companies that provide the services on top of

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the network. As our customers grow, which happens quickly, they need to scale horizontally, and they want a solution that load balances so availability remains unaffected by increased traffic. Most of the time, they want load balancing for session persistence – shopping cart functionality, for instance. These are critical services for which load balancing is crucial. Their businesses depend on high availability and performance."

Blue Gecko, which is a Cisco shop, began investigating load balancing solutions from Cisco, F5 Networks and KEMP Technologies. Edwards placed priority on flexibility, scalability, availability, feature robustness, and performance, and began a comprehensive product analysis. Edwards focused in on KEMP Technologies and was given a couple of LoadMaster load balancers to test in Blue Gecko's Seattle data center for 30 days.

"After we recognized that we could do a variety of persistence methods with KEMP, determined that we could ensure availability with a couple of specialized applications, and confirmed that failover was seamless, our choice of KEMP became clear," said Edwards.

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## Solution

KEMP Technologies provided Blue Gecko with two LoadMaster Load Balancers for the Seattle data center, which supports such clients as Cranium, Pioneer Organics, and the World Wildlife Foundation (WWF, [www.panda.org](http://www.panda.org), see sidebar). The LoadMaster 2460 is an advanced, multi-port server load balancing and Layer 7 content switching appliance with integrated SSL Acceleration capability. The LoadMaster intelligently and efficiently distributes Web traffic among Web servers so that site visitors are getting the best experience possible, reducing the chance of abandoned shopping carts and increasing the frequency of repeat visits.

The Seattle deployment took two days and Edwards learned quickly how easy the solution was going to be with its intuitive interface. "Everything was straightforward from day one, and we were up and running literally inside of two days," said Edwards. Blue Gecko has plans to deploy some additional KEMP Technologies load balancers in a soon-to-open Dallas data center.

## Results

### *Offering Cost-Effective Load Balancing Boosts Business*

The LoadMaster 2460 is an essential component of high availability, clustering and fault tolerance, all of which provide the infrastructure for reliable ASP's and Internet sites, as well as corporate intranets.

"Before we started using KEMP products, we had to ask very specific questions when a customer requested load balancing, to make sure we could accommodate their needs," said Edwards. "Now we can accommodate just about every request without even thinking about it. KEMP has quickly brought us from a small hosting network to a larger ISP/ASP class infrastructure that can literally host thousands of customers."

### *Ease of Use and Reliability Please Internal and External Customers*

KEMP Technologies LoadMasters are easy to install and configure. "We have a small IT staff, and the KEMP products are straightforward enough that we've always been able to get things up and running very quickly," said Edwards.

## Panda Load Balancing

Established in 1961, WWF ([www.panda.org](http://www.panda.org)) operates in more than 100 countries, currently funding about 2,000 conservation projects and employing almost 4,000 people around the world. Panda.org, which is supported by Blue Gecko, must remain up and running 24/7. Visitors, including regular contributors and supporters of the organization, must be provided with a consistently positive experience in terms of performance and accessibility. Sluggishness can cause frustration, possibly site abandonment, and potentially disastrous results to their fundraising efforts. Blue Gecko, with the help of KEMP Technologies load balancing technology, ensures optimum performance, high-availability and scalability for the organization, which translates to continued support, repeat visits, and an improved bottom line.



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Additionally, external customers—the ASPs Blue Gecko supports—are just as happy. “Kudos from customers is not necessary,” said Edwards. “It’s better to hear *nothing* and that’s exactly what we hear. The only time we hear anything is when customers call us ready to make an upgrade, and then it’s a matter of Blue Gecko telling them how we can help them do it better, faster and cheaper. KEMP helps us deliver on these promises.”

**“Kudos [for availability and performance] from customers is not necessary. It’s better to hear nothing and that’s exactly what we hear [with the KEMP solution in place].”**

## Ready to Forge Ahead

Blue Gecko looks forward to moving ahead with KEMP Technologies by its side. With plans to grow regionally throughout the United States and eventually expand internationally, load balancing will be crucial with a rapidly growing customer base and the clientele of those customers also expanding.

“So far I have been able to leverage just one pair of KEMP LoadMasters across hundreds of customers,” said Edwards. “The solution has more than paid for itself already. It is only going to get more cost-effective as time goes by because as we add more customers, our costs only go down. We pass those savings on to our customers, and they probably don’t even realize what they owe KEMP Technologies in terms of retained business and an increased customer base. We’re very pleased that we chose KEMP Technologies to help us provide the best possible infrastructure for our customers.”

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