

A Reliable Force10 Networks Infrastructure Prepares Etsy for Rapid Future Growth of Its Online Community

Customer
PROFILE

Customer

Etsy, Inc.

Etsy

Industry

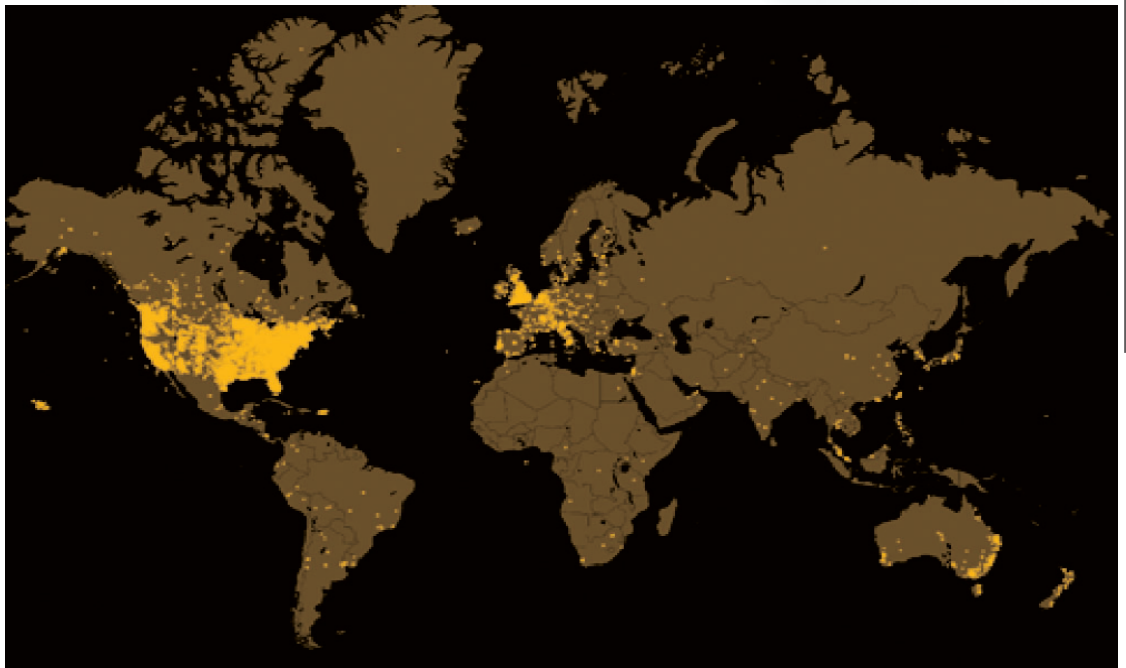
Online Marketplace

Application

Data Center Network

Highlights

With traffic expected to increase 10x over a short period of time, Etsy deployed the Force10 TeraScale E600 and S50 to build a network that could reliably scale with business demands.



Over 100,000 sellers from around the world have opened up Etsy online shops.

Etsy, Inc. is an online marketplace and community for people interested in buying and selling handmade crafts. Born out of a love to create and a disdain for big-box retailers, Etsy, Inc. has seen tremendous growth since it was founded in 2005. In January 2008 alone, its website received more than 245 million page views, representing a 20 percent increase from the previous month.

An online marketplace, like any other community, must have a strong infrastructure to support existing services and accommodate future growth. To ensure its network infrastructure could help provide a good customer experience today and support dizzying growth for the future, the Brooklyn, N.Y.-based Etsy, Inc. chose to partner with Force10 Networks®, deploying the TeraScale E-Series® family of switch/routers and the S-Series family of access switches.

Supporting Big-Time Growth

With a thriving online marketplace and virtual classes that include instruction on craft skills and marketing an online business, Etsy, Inc. has achieved remarkable success blending Web 2.0 e-commerce with good old-fashioned community building. At the beginning of 2008, more than 500,000 new items and 55,000 new buyers were added each month to the Etsy, Inc. community. With success, however, comes responsibility. From an IT perspective, this meant deploying a network infrastructure that provides reliable access and information delivery for customers to sell their crafts.

"We have to be able to handle traffic of all types and sizes for our community members," says Dusten Splan, senior system administrator at Etsy, Inc. "This is their 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week crafts fair, and our network infrastructure is the fundamental guarantee of their online presence."

FORCE10

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Dusten Splan

Senior System Administrator
Etsy, Inc.

Setting the Foundation for Growth

To support the growth of the community, including an increasing number of transactions and interactions, Etsy, Inc.'s engineering team knew it needed a reliable and scalable foundation going forward that was not susceptible to a single point of failure. The network infrastructure required robustness to answer the unpredictability of network traffic in an online marketplace.

"You can have a user, for example, who posts on their blog that they will be selling 100 new items at a discounted rate starting at 2 p.m. If that person has a large enough following, it can create a huge influx of traffic," Splan explains. "We need predictability in our network and the flexibility to dynamically accommodate that potential instantaneous change in traffic patterns because it cannot be predicted or controlled."

To lay the foundation for an anticipated 10x growth in network traffic (measured by Etsy, Inc. in both Megabits per second and page views) over a relatively short period of time, the engineering team set out to build a reliable networking infrastructure. Chief among the requirements was the ability to handle the unpredictable spikes in network traffic today as well as the predictable future growth, cost effectively scaling with the business.

"I didn't want to rip out a bunch of chassis again in a year," Splan says. "We were looking for an infrastructure that supported our business goals today and also provided the flexibility to adapt to any changes in those plans. Force10 delivered on both fronts."

Etsy, Inc. deployed two Force10 TeraScale E600s in the core to provide full network redundancy. At the edge, Etsy, Inc. deployed more than 20 S50 access switches to aggregate a variety of name brand and generic servers.

According to Splan, the Force10 solution paid instant dividends. Deploying the dual Force10 TeraScale E600s eliminated the architectural

points of failure that were present in their legacy switch. With a non-blocking architecture, the TeraScale E600 delivers full line-rate performance while a separate forwarding path and control plane enable maximum efficiency and reliability. Within the control plane, switching, routing and management functionalities are distributed between three separate CPUs to ensure maximum uptime and best-in-class resiliency. Additionally, this architecture ensures predictable performance regardless of feature use or traffic conditions.

"Having everything at full line rate is a significant plus because in the last six months, we've grown more than 50 percent and in the next six months we could easily grow another 50 percent if not more. Knowing my network infrastructure is not going to start dropping packets as soon as we start reaching certain thresholds is something that will enable me to sleep better at night," Splan says.

FTOS, the Force10 operating system, further contributes to the reliability and predictability of the Force10 networking solution with inherent protocol scalability and modular processes that isolate faults to protect the system. Splan says having that common management functionality and command line interface helped speed up deployment, improved ease of use and contributed to a lower total cost of ownership.

Building for Tomorrow

As community builders, Etsy, Inc. is well aware that a strong foundation is essential to support the increasing number of people who rely on them for both profit and enjoyment of making, selling and buying handmade crafts.

"Above all, Etsy, Inc. is a community that brings likeminded people from diverse geographies together in a single marketplace," says Splan. "And in this type of online community environment, the network is the bedrock on which everything else is built. With Force10, we have that solid foundation to move forward."



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