F5 Survey Shows App Services Critical in a DevOps-Driven Multi-Cloud World

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Fifth annual study looks at ways digital transformation is driving strategic decisions about deployment and management of apps

SEATTLE--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- F5 Networks (NASDAQ: FFIV) today announced the availability of its 2019 State of Application Services report. This year's survey showed that organizations regard application services as vital for cloud adoption and, ultimately, for success in today's app-driven digital economy. Emerging application services like ingress control and IoT gateways are on the rise, and together with established services such as firewalls and global server load balancing, are enabling companies to adapt to the requirements of today's multi-cloud world.

"Applications are now the most valuable asset in the modern enterprise, defining a new era of Application Capital," said Kara Sprague, Senior Vice President and General Manager, Application Services Business Unit at F5. "This year's report explores the approaches companies are taking on their digital transformation journeys and how they are optimizing the people, processes, and systems used to develop, deploy, and deliver applications for competitive advantage and business impact."

The report reflects input from nearly 2,000 respondents globally across a range of industries, company sizes, and roles. Participants were asked about the challenges and opportunities presented by the ongoing process of digital transformation, resulting in a comprehensive analysis of how IT organizations are transforming to meet the ever-changing demands of the digital economy.

Survey Highlights

The survey shows that as multi-cloud has evolved into a comprehensive strategy for innovation, app services have reclaimed their status as a key player in digital transformation and business success. The report lays out the results through an in-depth examination of four key findings:

1. Nearly 9 out of 10 respondents have multi-cloud architectures, driven by an app-first methodology. App-centric business requires a multi-cloud strategy, with most organizations evaluating cloud decisions based on what environment is best for each application. But it's still a challenge to enforce consistent security and ensure reliable performance. Nearly half of organizations (48%) undergoing a digital transformation initiative report being hamstrung by the difficulty of achieving consistent security for applications distributed among multiple cloud platforms.

2. Sixty-nine percent of respondents are executing digital transformation—and app data reigns. With more than two-thirds of respondents engaged in ongoing digital initiatives, IT organizations are re-evaluating their structures, processes, and workflows. Organizations are taking advantage of agile development methodologies (52%) and moving applications to the public cloud (48%), as well as exploring new application architectures such as containerization (42%). Taken together, these shifts all point to a changing application landscape: one that is automated, cloud-centric, and influenced by responsiveness to business priorities.

3. Fifty-six percent of respondents are employing containers; gateways, app security, and availability are growing in importance. While the most popular application services remain consistent, changes are coming. Over the past five years we've tracked the deployment of application services and noted that there is a consistent set that tops the charts every year: antivirus, network firewall, SSL VPN, and load balancing. But this year there are some newcomers. The rise of containers has also boosted the deployment plans for SDN and API gateways, with reported adoption at 47% and 42%, respectively. Adoption of service mesh is on the rise too, at 27%.

4. Sixty-two percent of respondents are deploying automation and orchestration initiatives— and developer-oriented solutions are leading the charge. Automating and orchestrating development and deployment pipelines help organizations keep up with the rapid rate of change required for external-facing applications. With silos breaking down and cross-functional teams speeding innovation, organizations are standardizing on developer-oriented solutions to implement CI/CD practices throughout IT. DevOps favorites such as GitHub enterprise and Jenkins are rising in popularity. With more than one-third of organizations automating all four key components of the production pipeline, it's clear DevOps has moved from strategic differentiator for a set of early adopters to a mainstream part of operations.

Additional Resources

- Download the 2019 State of Application Services report
- State of Application Services 2019: Applications Drive Decisions in a Digital Economy – Blog
- The Evolving Trends in Application Services: A 5-Year Review – Blog

About F5

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