



Why Web Performance is key to success in online gaming

More and more companies are starting to pay attention to the issue of Web Performance as a key success factor in their online businesses. And it is indeed no less important in the area of online gaming.

There are four main reasons why online gaming operators should pay close attention to their Web Performance:

1. The complexity of IT systems and services
2. SEO - Google will include “web site speed” in it’s ranking algorithm in 2010
3. Web site conversion & retention – A fast web site is key to customer acquisition & retention
4. Coping with peak loads

The complexity of IT systems and services

The fast paced development of web technology has made it easy for online gaming operators to integrate content and services from third parties.

Most major operators now act as “content aggregators” and offer products such as casino, poker and bingo from selected third parties under their own brand.

As this complex ecosystem of content and interdependent services expands it becomes the daunting task of burdened IT managers to monitor and assure the quality of delivery from every corner of their IT platform.

In fact, if only one little piece fails, it can bring the whole web site down. Web Performance partners, like Apica, offer remedy for these kinds of situations with Web Performance monitoring services such as Apica WebPerformance™.

With Apica WebPerformance™ you can get an overview of response times of critical components of your web applications. If things go wrong you will be alerted, via SMS or email. You can monitor complete user scenarios such as landing on home page – clicking “register” - filling out a form – having a “registration complete” page served, thus making sure that there are no breaks in your critical user flows.

External content caused problem

One online gaming operator had a “freeze” or “hang” problem that would happen occasionally when users tried to load the home page. The page incorporated an XML feed from the casino system provider displaying current jackpot values.

A flash movie displaying the jackpot values was thought to be the problem because of the large size of the movie. Apica’s analysis of the loading sequence showed that it was the XML feed itself, not the movie, that would “hang” and interrupt the page load. As the XML feed problem was rectified, the “hang” problem disappeared.

SEO & importance of web site speed

At the end of 2009 Google leaked its plans to include “web site speed” in their ranking algorithm. As most online gaming brands are heavily dependent on successful SEO practices, this is news to be taken very, very seriously. What it means is that if you suffer from bad Web Performance for one reason or another, even temporarily, your ranking might be punished.

We believe this will serve as a wake up call for IT managers who have not yet taken a proactive approach to monitoring and improving their Web Performance.

Web site conversion and retention

It is a well known fact that most internet gamblers have accounts at multiple sites. When it comes to your most valuable players, your high rollers, you can be almost sure that you’re not the only one who’s quenching their gambling thirst.

It is also a well known fact that Internet users are impatient by nature and will leave your site if it does not give them what they want, when they want it. Results from different studies vary, but in general you have something like a couple of seconds before a user will start to look elsewhere.

So imagine when that dearly acquired customer arrives, loads your page, the page goes into “hourglass mode” and just hangs, and the customer goes back to your competitor that you just persuaded them to leave?!

Almost no other online business is as fiercely competitive in terms of customer acquisition as online gaming, so you simply cannot afford to let those expensive leads roll off your landing page.

Apply Web Performance best practices and marketing managers will meet aggressive ROI targets time after time.

Load balancers didn’t work properly

Customers were complaining that they couldn’t get the site to load. Customer service staff had no problem, IT operations neither. What was going on?

By putting monitoring agents on each of the load balancer “fronts” Apica found that one of the load balancers did not work properly. So individual Web Performance was determined by chance, if you happened to be directed to one of the fronts that worked, everything was ok. But, if you happened to be directed to the one that didn’t work you’d be unable to access the site.

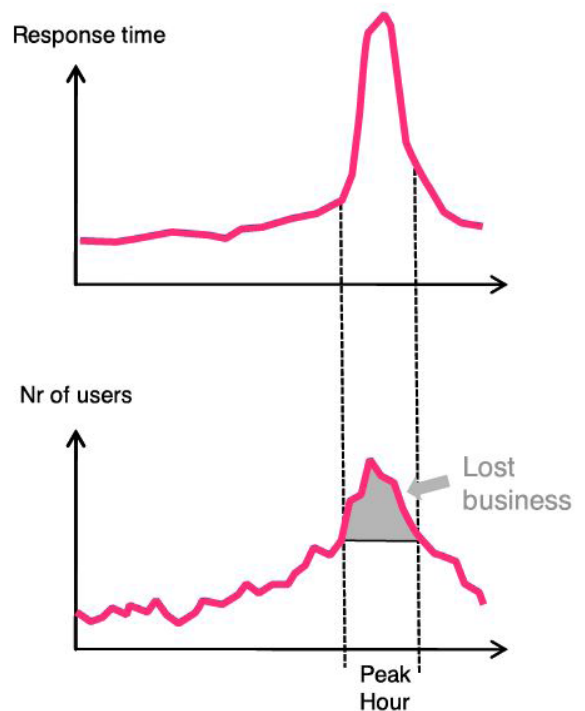
Even though chance is a vital component of successful gambling services, this was not where you wanted it!

Coping with peak loads

Many online operators are subject to sharp peak loads. It's good news when visitors arrive in great number at major sports events or as result of a successful campaign. But if you're unable to handle the extra traffic loads the new visitors will destroy the experience for everyone as response times deteriorate.

We recommend that you use the so-called "shop sale" technique if you want an extra layer of performance guarantee. This is a sort of "worst case scenario" remedy and it is also a cost effective measure, compared to other investments in increased capacity which is superfluous outside of your peak hours.

With this technique only traffic up to a preset volume is allowed and all other traffic above this volume is redirected to an external "wait page". Compare this to a bouncer that allows eager shoppers into a physical store, only as previous customers leave. Otherwise all users will get poor response times and in a worst case scenario the site will eventually crash as impatient users click and refresh their browsers. It is better to serve the customers who are already on the site and let the others get a polite 'please wait' message.



Apica is committed to the online gaming industry

We firmly believe that online gaming operators have huge benefits to reap by taking a proactive approach to Web Performance. That's why we are committed to serving the industry according to its specific needs and challenges.

If this did wet your appetite, visit us today at www.apicasystem.com/gaming where you'll find more resources dedicated to the gaming industry.

"Uptime is crucial for success in the online gaming business. As a complete Web Performance partner Apica gives us the tools we need to monitor and improve our Web Performance across our wide and complex network of partner sites and services."

- Marcus Söderberg,
IT Operations Manager
at Entraction Group

Featured clients



Sitt inte lottlös.

