Computer Scientists Create New Routing Software For Web-Based Companies

Boston University

Large Internet sites tend to require a cluster of expensive equipment to handle customer queries. Typically a customized centralized router — a computer networking device that forwards data across a network toward its destinations — is required to direct each caller to the appropriate server. The server, in turn, is a computer system that provides services to other computing systems over a computer network.

Researchers at Boston University wanted to improve on the Internet-based customer service process by developing software that allows each server to act as an individual router, thereby enabling quicker response times to more people. With initial funding from the National Science Foundation, Professor Azer Bestavros, Ph.D., and Professor Mark Crovella, Ph.D., of Boston University's department of computer science developed the "distributed routing" prototype in 1997–1999.

In 1998 they co-founded a spin-off company, Commonwealth Network Technology (CNT) with Boston University's New Ventures unit and venture capital fund Community Technology Fund. CNT then developed a commercial application of

distributed routing for Windows NT. CNT was sold to WebManage Inc. in 1999 and, after further research and development, the i-Scaler product was launched in 2000.

> *i-Scaler enables each server to be used as a router, allowing information to be routed more quickly to multiple clients from multiple servers simultaneously.*

Instead of facing possible bottlenecks at one central router, iScaler opens up more pathways for information exchange. WebManage Inc. was acquired by Network Appliances in 2000.

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