Varnish Agent

More than just a REST interface

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... Not only a REST interface...

But mostly!

And that's a good thing!

REST interface

- Not a single question mark in the URLs!

- GET /vcl/boot. PUT /vcl/blatti

- Modularized – easy to extend (sort of)

- Does not fork varnishadm and log

- Talks directly to varnish with CLI

- Reads the shmlog directly

What can you do?

- Stats (varnsihstat)

- Stop

- Start

- Review VCL

- Change VCL

- Parameters

- Arbitrary varnishadm commands (don't do this – it's the in-line C of the agent)

Stats

- Everyone does that, so why care?

- Vmods: assert() is not very fun.

- Vmods: Err... threading isn't actually easy.

- Stats should be just stats – not HTML, JavaScript, etc.

- Agent: Just deliver the stats, let Other Things deal with processing.

- Ok, then there's. "/html/"

Embed stats easily

- Put Varnish in front of Varnish Agent!

  - E.g.: http://pathfinder.kly.no

- Let your web developers make whatever dashboard they want

- Tune your stack based on varnishstat if you like.

Mandatory Real-World example

- Distributed network of machines used to cache TV broadcasting station

- Accesses content from the broadcaster, but is maintained by local admins (different company)

- SSH access not guaranteed to the broadcaster

- Still need to be able to gather stats, verify VCL and ban content (e.g.: if broadcasting something they shouln't by accident)

- Agent solves all these problems.

Real world example:
Centralized admin console

- Business needs to have a value-add to customers beyond "we're awesome"

- Creates centralized adminstration console – needs to talk to Varnish to control all aspects of it

- CLI is a hassle to implement in Java (?!), use the agent instead!

Persisting VCL changes

- VCL deployments (vcl.use) is saved to a /var/lib/....../boot.vcl

- Have varnishd use this on boot instead of /etc/varnish/default.vcl

- Now Varnish will use your agent-provided VCL on boot

TODO

- SSL (...)

- JSON in Varnish – agent tends to break with Varnish upgrades

- Actually get the Varnish 4.1-compatible agent released!

- Health/backend control

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