

a load on the server application that has generally the same distribution as a load represented within the access log.

17. The method of claim 16, further comprising prompting a user to enter a control parameter, wherein the load has a magnitude which is specified by the control parameter.

18. The method of claim 13, wherein the step of processing comprises translating access records within the access log into a plurality of test scripts.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein the step of load-testing comprises running the plurality of test scripts concurrently to emulate multiple concurrent users of the server application.

20. The method of claim 13, wherein the step of load-testing comprises submitting the client requests from the testing application to the server application using a standard Internet client-server protocol.

21. A computer-readable medium having stored thereon a computer program which, when executed by a computer, causes the computer to perform the steps of:

(a) retrieving and processing a standard-format server access log generated by a server of a multi-user network, the server configured to serve informational content to users over the network in response to informational requests, the access log representing informational requests submitted to the server by multiple different users following deployment of the server within the network; and

(b) using information extracted from the access log in step (a), generating and storing a load test which specifies informational requests to be submitted to the server, the load test adapted to be run using a testing application to apply a load to and test performance of the server.

22. The computer-readable medium of claim 21, wherein the load test includes a plurality of test scripts.

23. The computer-readable medium of claim 22, wherein the load test further comprises control parameters which specify, for each respective test script, a number of virtual users that are to play the respective test script.

24. The computer-readable medium of claim 21, wherein the load test includes a plurality of test scripts, each test script including addresses of content entities served by the server, the addresses extracted from the access log in step (a).

25. The computer-readable medium of claim 21, wherein the access log represents client accesses to a plurality of content entities that are served by the server, and the load test defines a load which has substantially the same distribution among the content entities as a load represented by the access log.

26. The computer-readable medium of claim 25, wherein the computer program further causes the computer to prompt a user to enter a control parameter that specifies a magnitude of a load to be applied to the server, and step (b) comprises using the control parameter to generate the load test.

27. The computer-readable medium of claim 26, wherein the control parameter is a number of virtual users to be included in the load test, wherein each virtual user plays a test script.

28. The computer-readable medium of claim 21, wherein the server is a web server, and step (a) comprises using timestamps and user identifiers contained within the access log to identify hypertextual navigation paths followed by users.

29. The computer-readable medium of claim 21, wherein the computer program further causes the computer to run the load test generated in step (b) while monitoring performance of the server.

30. A method of generating a load test for testing a web site, the method comprising the computer-implemented steps of:

retrieving a standard-format server access log generated by a web server of the web site during ordinary usage of the web site within a multi-user network, the access log stored within a computer memory and representing accesses to content entities of the web site by multiple users;

processing the access log to identify a plurality of navigation routes followed by a plurality of different users of the web site; and

incorporating the navigation routes into the load test such that a distribution of access requests among the content entities as reflected within the access log is generally preserved, load test adapted to be run by a testing application to apply a load to and test performance of the web site.

31. The method of claim 30, wherein the step of identifying a plurality of navigation routes comprises identifying first and second content entities accessed by a user in sequence, and determining whether a navigational link exists between the first and second content entities.

32. The method of claim 30, wherein the step of incorporating the navigation routes into the load test comprises merging consecutive routes of the plurality of navigation routes.

33. The method of claim 30, wherein the load test includes a plurality of test scripts.

34. The method of claim 30, further comprising the running the load test with the testing application to test the performance of the server.

35. The method of claim 30, further comprising prompting a user to enter a control parameter that specifies a magnitude of a load to be applied to the server by the load test, and incorporating the control parameter into the load test.

36. The method of claim 35, wherein the control parameter is a number of virtual users to be included in the load test, wherein each virtual user plays a test script during running of the load test.

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