Configuring RADIUS Server Load Balancing

The RADIUS Server Load Balancing feature distributes authentication, authorization, and accounting (AAA) authentication and accounting transactions across RADIUS servers in a server group. These servers can share the AAA transaction load and thereby respond faster to incoming requests.

This module describes the RADIUS Server Load Balancing feature.

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Prerequisites for RADIUS Server Load Balancing

- Authentication, authorization, and accounting (AAA) must be configured on the RADIUS server.
- AAA RADIUS server groups must be configured.
- RADIUS must be configured for functions such as authentication, accounting, or static route download.

Restrictions for RADIUS Server Load Balancing

- Incoming RADIUS requests, such as Packet of Disconnect (POD) requests, are not supported.
- Load balancing is not supported on proxy RADIUS servers and for private server groups.

Information About RADIUS Server Load Balancing

RADIUS Server Load Balancing Overview

Load balancing distributes batches of transactions to RADIUS servers within a server group. Load balancing assigns each batch of transactions to the server with the lowest number of outstanding transactions in its queue. The process of assigning a batch of transactions is as follows:

1. The first transaction is received for a new batch.
2. All server transaction queues are checked.
3. The server with the lowest number of outstanding transactions is identified.
4. The identified server is assigned the next batch of transactions.

The batch size is a user-configured parameter. Changes in the batch size may impact CPU load and network throughput. As batch size increases, CPU load decreases and network throughput increases. However, if a large batch size is used, all available server resources may not be fully utilized. As batch size decreases, CPU load increases and network throughput decreases.

Note There is no set number for large or small batch sizes. A batch with more than 50 transactions is considered large and a batch with fewer than 25 transactions is considered small.

Note If a server group contains ten or more servers, we recommend that you set a high batch size to reduce CPU load.

Transaction Load Balancing Across RADIUS Server Groups

You can configure load balancing either per-named RADIUS server group or for the global RADIUS server group. The load balancing server group must be referred to as “radius” in the authentication, authorization, and accounting (AAA) method lists. All public servers that are part of the RADIUS server group are then load balanced.

You can configure authentication and accounting to use the same RADIUS server or different servers. In some cases, the same server can be used for preauthentication, authentication, or accounting transactions for a session. The preferred server, which is an internal setting and is set as the default, informs AAA to use the same server for the start and stop record for a session regardless of the server cost. When using the preferred server setting, ensure that the server that is used for the initial transaction (for example, authentication), the preferred server, is part of any other server group that is used for a subsequent transaction (for example, accounting).

The preferred server is not used if one of the following criteria is true:

- The **load-balance method least-outstanding ignore-preferred-server** command is used.
- The preferred server is dead.

- The preferred server is in quarantine.
- The want server flag has been set, overriding the preferred server setting.

The want server flag, an internal setting, is used when the same server must be used for all stages of a multistage transaction regardless of the server cost. If the want server is not available, the transaction fails.

You can use the **load-balance method least-outstanding ignore-preferred-server** command if you have either of the following configurations:

- Dedicated authentication server and a separate dedicated accounting server
- Network where you can track all call record statistics and call record details, including start and stop records and records that are stored on separate servers

If you have a configuration where authentication servers are a superset of accounting servers, the preferred server is not used.

RADIUS Server Status and Automated Testing

The RADIUS Server Load Balancing feature considers the server status when assigning batches. Transaction batches are sent only to live servers. We recommend that you test the status of all RADIUS load-balanced servers, including low usage servers (for example, backup servers).

Transactions are not sent to a server that is marked dead. A server is marked dead until its timer expires, at which time it moves to quarantine state. A server is in quarantine until it is verified alive by the RADIUS automated tester functionality.

To determine if a server is alive and available to process transactions, the RADIUS automated tester sends a request periodically to the server for a test user ID. If the server returns an Access-Reject message, the server is alive; otherwise the server is either dead or quarantined.

A transaction sent to an unresponsive server is failed over to the next available server before the unresponsive server is marked dead. We recommend that you use the retry reorder mode for failed transactions.

When using the RADIUS automated tester, verify that the authentication, authorization, and accounting (AAA) servers are responding to the test packets that are sent by the network access server (NAS). If the servers are not configured correctly, packets may be dropped and the server erroneously marked dead.

Caution We recommend that you use a test user that is not defined on the RADIUS server for the RADIUS server automated testing to protect against security issues that may arise if the test user is not correctly configured.

Note Use the **test aaa group** command to check load-balancing transactions.

The **automate-tester username** *name* **probe-on** command is used to verify the status of a server by sending RADIUS packets. After this command is configured, a five-second dead timer is started and a RADIUS packet is sent to the external RADIUS server after five seconds. The server state is updated if there is a response from the external RADIUS server. If there is no response, the packets are sent out according to the timeout interval that is configured using the **radius-server timeout** command. This will continue for 180 seconds, and if there is still no response, a new dead timer is started based on the configured **radius-server deadtime** command.

VRF-Aware RADIUS Automated Testing

The RADIUS automated tester function works at a server-level configuration. There is no group associated with the function. A VRF is a group level configuration. All the information related to the VRF and the source-interface configurations is maintained in a group structure. If information regarding the VRF and the source-interface configurations is available in the global source-interface, automated tester can access it. If the information is not available at the global source-interface or the default VRF, automated tester marks the server as a dead server.

Starting with Cisco IOS XE Bengaluru 17.4.1, you can configure automated tester to be VRF aware. You can use the **vrf** keyword with the **automate-tester** command to enable automate-tester for a non-default VRF.

Note For VRF aware automate-tester to work, you have to configure **global config ipv4/ipv6 source interface** *interface-name* **vrf** *vrf-name* command.

How to Configure RADIUS Server Load Balancing

Enabling Load Balancing for a Named RADIUS Server Group

Procedure

	Command or Action	Purpose
Step 1	**enable** **Example:** `Device> enable`	Enables privileged EXEC mode. Enter your password, if prompted.
Step 2	**configure terminal** **Example:** `Device# configure terminal`	Enters global configuration mode.
Step 3	**aaa group server radius** *group-name* **Example:** `Device(config)# aaa group server radius rad-sg`	Enters server group configuration mode.
Step 4	**server ip-address [auth-port port-number] [acct-port port-number]** **Example:** `Device(config-sg-radius)# server 192.0.2.238 auth-port 2095 acct-port 2096`	Configures the IP address of the RADIUS server for the group server.
Step 5	**load-balance method least-outstanding** [**batch-size** *number*] [**ignore-preferred-server**]	Enables the least-outstanding load balancing for a named server group.

	Command or Action	Purpose
	Example: `Device(config-sg-radius)# load-balance method least-outstanding batch-size 30`	
Step 6	**end** **Example:** `Device(config-sg-radius)# end`	Exits server group configuration mode and returns to privileged EXEC mode.

Troubleshooting RADIUS Server Load Balancing

After configuring the RADIUS Server Load Balancing feature, you can monitor the idle timer, dead timer, and load balancing server selection or verify the server status by using a manual test command.

Procedure

Step 1 Use the **debug aaa test** command to determine when an idle timer or dead timer has expired, when test packets are sent, the status of the server, or to verify the server state.

The idle timer is used to check the server status and is updated with or without any incoming requests. Monitoring the idle timer helps to determine if there are nonresponsive servers and to keep the RADIUS server status updated to efficiently utilize available resources. For instance, an updated idle timer would help ensure that incoming requests are sent to servers that are alive.

The dead timer is used either to determine that a server is dead or to update a dead server's status appropriately.

Monitoring server selection helps to determine how often the server selection changes. Server selection is effective in analyzing if there are any bottlenecks, a large number of queued requests, or if only specific servers are processing incoming requests.

The following sample output from the **debug aaa test** command shows when the idle timer expired:

Example:

```
Device# debug aaa test

Jul 16 00:07:01: AAA/SG/TEST: Server (192.0.2.245:1700,1701) quarantined.
Jul 16 00:07:01: AAA/SG/TEST: Sending test request(s) to server (192.0.2.245:1700,1701)
Jul 16 00:07:01: AAA/SG/TEST: Sending 1 Access-Requests, 1 Accounting-Requests in current
batch.
Jul 16 00:07:01: AAA/SG/TEST(Req#: 1): Sending test AAA Access-Request.
Jul 16 00:07:01: AAA/SG/TEST(Req#: 1): Sending test AAA Accounting-Request.
Jul 16 00:07:01: AAA/SG/TEST: Obtained Test response from server (192.0.2.245:1700,1701)
Jul 16 00:07:01: AAA/SG/TEST: Obtained Test response from server (192.0.2.245:1700,1701)
Jul 16 00:07:01: AAA/SG/TEST: Necessary responses received from server (192.0.2.245:1700,1701)
Jul 16 00:07:01: AAA/SG/TEST: Server (192.0.2.245:1700,1701) marked ALIVE. Idle timer set
for 60 sec(s).
Jul 16 00:07:01: AAA/SG/TEST: Server (192.0.2.245:1700,1701) removed from quarantine.
```

Step 2 Use the **debug aaa sg-server selection** command to determine the server that is selected for load balancing.

The following sample output from the **debug aaa sg-server selection** command shows five access requests being sent to a server group with a batch size of three:

Example:

```
Device# debug aaa sg-server selection

Jul 16 03:15:05: AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT: Obtaining least loaded server.
Jul 16 03:15:05: AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT: [3] transactions remaining in batch. Reusing server.
Jul 16 03:15:05: AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT: Obtaining least loaded server.
Jul 16 03:15:05: AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT: [2] transactions remaining in batch. Reusing server.
Jul 16 03:15:05: AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT: Obtaining least loaded server.
Jul 16 03:15:05: AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT: [1] transactions remaining in batch. Reusing server.
Jul 16 03:15:05: AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT: Obtaining least loaded server.
Jul 16 03:15:05: AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT: No more transactions in batch. Obtaining a new server.
Jul 16 03:15:05: AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT: Obtaining a new least loaded server.
Jul 16 03:15:05: AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT: Server[0] load: 3
Jul 16 03:15:05: AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT: Server[1] load: 0
Jul 16 03:15:05: AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT: Server[2] load: 0
Jul 16 03:15:05: AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT: Selected Server[1] with load 0
Jul 16 03:15:05: AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT: [3] transactions remaining in batch.
Jul 16 03:15:05: AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT: Obtaining least loaded server.
Jul 16 03:15:05: AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT: [2] transactions remaining in batch. Reusing server.
```

Step 3 Use the **test aaa group** command to manually verify the RADIUS load-balanced server status.

The following sample output shows the response from a load-balanced RADIUS server that is alive when the username “test” does not match a user profile. The server is verified alive when it issues an Access-Reject response to an authentication, authorization, and accounting (AAA) packet generated using the **test aaa group** command.

Example:

```
Device# test aaa group SG1 test lab new-code

00:06:07: RADIUS/ENCODE(00000000):Orig. component type = INVALID
00:06:07: RADIUS/ENCODE(00000000): dropping service type, "radius-server attribute 6
on-for-login-auth" is off
00:06:07: RADIUS(00000000): Config NAS IP: 192.0.2.4
00:06:07: RADIUS(00000000): sending
00:06:07: RADIUS/ENCODE: Best Local IP-Address 192.0.2.141 for Radius-Server 192.0.2.176
00:06:07: RADIUS(00000000): Send Access-Request to 192.0.2.176:1645 id 1645/1, len 50
00:06:07: RADIUS:  authenticator CA DB F4 9B 7B 66 C8 A9 - D1 99 4E 8E A4 46 99 B4
00:06:07: RADIUS:  User-Password       [2]   18  *
00:06:07: RADIUS:  User-Name           [1]   6   "test"
00:06:07: RADIUS:  NAS-IP-Address      [4]   6   192.0.2.141
00:06:07: RADIUS: Received from id 1645/1 192.0.2.176:1645, Access-Reject, len 44
00:06:07: RADIUS:  authenticator 2F 69 84 3E F0 4E F1 62 - AB B8 75 5B 38 82 49 C3
00:06:07: RADIUS:  Reply-Message       [18]  24
00:06:07: RADIUS:   41 75 74 68 65 6E 74 69 63 61 74 69 6F 6E 20 66  [Authentication f]
00:06:07: RADIUS:   61 69 6C 75 72 65                               [failure]
00:06:07: RADIUS(00000000): Received from id 1645/1
00:06:07: RADIUS/DECODE: Reply-Message fragments, 22, total 22 bytes
```

Enabling VRF Aware RADIUS Automated Testing

To enable RADIUS automated testing for a non-default VRF, perform the following procedure:

Procedure

	Command or Action	Purpose
Step 1	**enable** **Example:** `Device>enable`	Enables privileged EXEC mode. Enter your password, if prompted.
Step 2	**configure terminal** **Example:** `Device# configure terminal`	Enters global configuration mode.
Step 3	**radius server** *name* **Example:** `Device(config)# radius server myserver`	Specifies the name of the RADIUS server configuration and enters RADIUS server configuration mode.
Step 4	**address** {**ipv4** | **ipv6**} {*ip-address* | *host-name*} **auth-port** *port-numer* **acct-port** *port-number* **Example:** `Device(config-radius-server)# address ipv4 192.0.2.1 auth-port 1812 acct-port 1813`	Configures the IPv4 address for the RADIUS server accounting and authentication parameters.

Step 5	**automate-tester username** *user* [**ignore-auth-port**] [**ignore-acct-port**] [**idle-time** *minutes*] **vrf** *vrf-name* or **automate-tester username** *user* **probe-on vrf** *vrf-name*
	Example:
	`Device(config-radius-server)# automate-tester username user1 idle-time 2 vrf VRF1`
	or
	`Device(config-radius-server)# automate-tester username user1 probe-on vrf VRF1`
		Enables RADIUS automated testing for a non-default VRF.

Step 6	**end** **Example:** `Device(config-radius-server)# end`	Exits RADIUS server configuration mode and returns to privileged EXEC mode.

Configuration Examples for RADIUS Server Load Balancing

Example: Enabling Load Balancing for a Named RADIUS Server Group

The following examples show load balancing enabled for a named RADIUS server group. These examples are shown in three parts: the current configuration of the RADIUS command output, debug output, and authentication, authorization, and accounting (AAA) server status information.

The following sample output shows the relevant RADIUS configuration:

```
Device# show running-config
.
.
.
aaa group server radius server-group1
 server 192.0.2.238 auth-port 2095 acct-port 2096
 server 192.0.2.238 auth-port 2015 acct-port 2016
 load-balance method least-outstanding batch-size 5
!
aaa authentication ppp default group server-group1
aaa accounting network default start-stop group server-group1
.
.
.
Device(config-sg-radius)# load-balance method least-outstanding batch-size 30
```

The lines in the current configuration of the preceding RADIUS command output are defined as follows:

- The **aaa group server radius** command shows the configuration of a server group with two member servers.
- The **load-balance** command enables load balancing for global RADIUS server groups with the batch size specified.
- The **aaa authentication ppp** command authenticates all PPP users using RADIUS.
- The **aaa accounting** command enables sending of all accounting requests to the AAA server when the client is authenticated and then disconnected using the **start-stop** keyword.

The show debug sample output below shows the selection of the preferred server and the processing of requests for the preceding configuration:

```
Device# show debug

*Feb 28 13:51:16.019:AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT(0000002C):No preferred server available.
*Feb 28 13:51:16.019:AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT:Obtaining least loaded server.
*Feb 28 13:51:16.019:AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT:No more transactions in batch. Obtaining a new
server.
*Feb 28 13:51:16.019:AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT:Obtaining a new least loaded server.
*Feb 28 13:51:16.019:AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT:Server[0] load:0
*Feb 28 13:51:16.019:AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT:Server[1] load:0
*Feb 28 13:51:16.019:AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT:Selected Server[0] with load 0
*Feb 28 13:51:16.019:AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT:[5] transactions remaining in batch.
*Feb 28 13:51:16.019:AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT(0000002C):Server (192.0.2.238:2095,2096) now being
 used as preferred server
*Feb 28 13:51:16.019:AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT(0000002D):No preferred server available.
*Feb 28 13:51:16.019:AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT:Obtaining least loaded server.
*Feb 28 13:51:16.019:AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT:[4] transactions remaining in batch. Reusing
server.
```

```
*Feb 28 13:51:16.019:AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT(0000002D):Server (192.0.2.238:2095,2096) now being
 used as preferred server
*Feb 28 13:51:16.019:AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT(0000002E):No preferred server available.
*Feb 28 13:51:16.019:AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT:Obtaining least loaded server.
*Feb 28 13:51:16.019:AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT:[3] transactions remaining in batch. Reusing
server.
*Feb 28 13:51:16.019:AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT(0000002E):Server (192.0.2.238:2095,2096) now being
 used as preferred server
*Feb 28 13:51:16.019:AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT(0000002F):No preferred server available.
*Feb 28 13:51:16.019:AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT:Obtaining least loaded server.
*Feb 28 13:51:16.019:AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT:[2] transactions remaining in batch. Reusing
server.
*Feb 28 13:51:16.019:AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT(0000002F):Server (192.0.2.238:2095,2096) now being
 used as preferred server
*Feb 28 13:51:16.019:AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT(00000030):No preferred server available.
*Feb 28 13:51:16.019:AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT:Obtaining least loaded server.
*Feb 28 13:51:16.019:AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT:[1] transactions remaining in batch. Reusing
server.
*Feb 28 13:51:16.019:AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT(00000030):Server (192.0.2.238:2095,2096) now being
 used as preferred server
*Feb 28 13:51:16.023:AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT(00000031):No preferred server available.
*Feb 28 13:51:16.023:AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT:Obtaining least loaded server.
*Feb 28 13:51:16.023:AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT:No more transactions in batch. Obtaining a new
server.
*Feb 28 13:51:16.023:AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT:Obtaining a new least loaded server.
*Feb 28 13:51:16.023:AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT:Server[1] load:0
*Feb 28 13:51:16.023:AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT:Server[0] load:5
*Feb 28 13:51:16.023:AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT:Selected Server[1] with load 0
*Feb 28 13:51:16.023:AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT:[5] transactions remaining in batch.
*Feb 28 13:51:16.023:AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT(00000031):Server (192.0.2.238:2015,2016) now being
 used as preferred server
*Feb 28 13:51:16.023:AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT(00000032):No preferred server available.
*Feb 28 13:51:16.023:AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT:Obtaining least loaded server.
*Feb 28 13:51:16.023:AAA/SG/SERVER_SELECT:[4] transactions remaining in batch. Reusing
server.
.
.
.
```

The following sample output from the **show aaa servers** command shows the AAA server status for the named RADIUS server group configuration:

The sample output shows the status of two RADIUS servers. Both servers are alive, and no requests have been processed since the counters were cleared 0 minutes ago.

```
Device# show aaa servers

RADIUS: id 3, priority 1, host 9:76:239::219, auth-port 1812, acct-port 1813, hostname r6
State: current UP, duration 223000s, previous duration 301s
Dead: total time 682s, count 2
Platform State from SMD: current UP, duration 222972s, previous duration 258s
SMD Platform Dead: total time 702s, count 3
Platform State from WNCD (1) : current UP
Platform State from WNCD (2) : current UP
Platform State from WNCD (3) : current UP
Platform State from WNCD (4) : current UP
Platform State from WNCD (5) : current UP
Platform State from WNCD (6) : current UP
Platform State from WNCD (7) : current UP
Platform State from WNCD (8) : current UP, duration 2451264s, previous duration 258s
Platform Dead: total time 703s, count 3
Quarantined: No
Authen: request 68, timeouts 68, failover 0, retransmission 53
```

```
Sates defination:
State: current UP. ===> this is IOSD state
Platform State from SMD: current UP. ====> This is wired BINOS i,e SMD
Platform State from WNCD (1) : current UP ===> This is wireless BINOS i.e WNCD instance 1
Platform State from WNCD (2) : current UP. ===> This is wireless BINOS i.e WNCD instance 2
Platform State from WNCD (3) : current UP
Platform State from WNCD (4) : current UP
Platform State from WNCD (5) : current UP
Platform State from WNCD (6) : current UP
Platform State from WNCD (7) : current UP
Platform State from WNCD (8) : current UP. ===> This is wireless BINOS i.e WNCD instance 8
```

Example: Monitoring Idle Timer

The following example shows idle timer and related server state for load balancing enabled for a named RADIUS server group. The current configuration of the RADIUS command output and debug command output are also displayed.

The following sample output shows the relevant RADIUS configuration:

```
Device(config)# do show run aaa

aaa group server radius server-group1
radius server server1
address ipv4 192.0.2.1 auth-port 1812 acct-port 1813
automate-tester username user1 idle-time 2 vrf VRF1
radius-server load-balance method least-outstanding batch-size 5
```

The lines in the current configuration of the preceding RADIUS command output are defined as follows:

- The **aaa group server radius** command shows the configuration of a server group.
- The **radius server** and **address** command defines the RADIUS server name and IP address of the RADIUS server with authorization and accounting ports specified.
- The **radius-server load-balance** command enables load balancing for the RADIUS server with the batch size specified.

The **show debug** sample output below shows test requests being sent to servers. The response to the test request sent to the server is received, the server is removed from quarantine as appropriate, the server is marked alive, and then the idle timer is reset.

```
Device# show debug

*Feb 28 13:52:20.835:AAA/SG/TEST:Server (192.0.2.238:2015,2016) quarantined.
*Feb 28 13:52:20.835:AAA/SG/TEST:Sending test request(s) to server (192.0.2.238:2015,2016)
*Feb 28 13:52:20.835:AAA/SG/TEST:Sending 1 Access-Requests, 1 Accounting-Requests in current
 batch.
*Feb 28 13:52:20.835:AAA/SG/TEST(Req#:1):Sending test AAA Access-Request.
*Feb 28 13:52:20.835:AAA/SG/TEST(Req#:1):Sending test AAA Accounting-Request.
*Feb 28 13:52:21.087:AAA/SG/TEST:Obtained Test response from server (192.0.2.238:2015,2016)
*Feb 28 13:52:22.651:AAA/SG/TEST:Obtained Test response from server (192.0.2.238:2015,2016)
*Feb 28 13:52:22.651:AAA/SG/TEST:Necessary responses received from server
(192.0.2.238:2015,2016)
*Feb 28 13:52:22.651:AAA/SG/TEST:Server (192.0.2.238:2015,2016) marked ALIVE. Idle timer
set for 60 secs(s).
*Feb 28 13:52:22.651:AAA/SG/TEST:Server (192.0.2.238:2015,2016) removed from quarantine.
.
.
.
```

Example: Configuring the Preferred Server with the Same Authentication and Authorization Server

The following example shows an authentication server group and an authorization server group that use the same servers 209.165.200.225 and 209.165.200.226. Both server groups have the preferred server flag enabled.

```
Device> enable
Device# configure terminal
Device(config)# aaa group server radius authentication-group
Device(config-sg-radius)# server 209.165.200.225 key radkey1
Device(config-sg-radius)# server 209.165.200.226 key radkey2
Device(config-sg-radius)# exit
Device(config)# aaa group server radius accounting-group
Device(config-sg-radius)# server 209.165.200.225 key radkey1
Device(config-sg-radius)# server 209.165.200.226 key radkey2
Device(config-sg-radius)# end
```

When a preferred server is selected for a session, all transactions for that session will continue to use the original preferred server. The servers 209.165.200.225 and 209.165.200.226 are load balanced based on sessions rather than transactions.

Example: Configuring the Preferred Server with Different Authentication and Authorization Servers

The following example shows an authentication server group that uses servers 209.165.200.225 and 209.165.200.226 and an authorization server group that uses servers 209.165.201.1 and 209.165.201.2. Both server groups have the preferred server flag enabled.

```
Device> enable
Device# configure terminal
Device(config)# aaa group server radius authentication-group
Device(config-sg-radius)# server 209.165.200.225 key radkey1
Device(config-sg-radius)# server 209.165.200.226 key radkey2
Device(config-sg-radius)# exit
Device(config)# aaa group server radius accounting-group
Device(config-sg-radius)# server 209.165.201.1 key radkey3
Device(config-sg-radius)# server 209.165.201.2 key radkey4
Device(config-sg-radius)# end
```

The authentication server group and the accounting server group do not share any common servers. A preferred server is never found for accounting transactions; therefore, authentication and accounting servers are load-balanced based on transactions. Start and stop records are sent to the same server for a session.

Example: Configuring the Preferred Server with Overlapping Authentication and Authorization Servers

The following example shows an authentication server group that uses servers 209.165.200.225, 209.165.200.226, and 209.165.201.1 and an accounting server group that uses servers 209.165.201.1 and 209.165.201.2. Both server groups have the preferred server flag enabled.

```
Device> enable
Device# configure terminal
Device(config)# aaa group server radius authentication-group
Device(config-sg-radius)# server 209.165.200.225 key radkey1
Device(config-sg-radius)# server 209.165.200.226 key radkey2
```

```
Device(config-sg-radius)# server 209.165.201.1 key radkey3
Device(config-sg-radius)# exit
Device(config)# aaa group server radius accounting-group
Device(config-sg-radius)# server 209.165.201.1 key radkey3
Device(config-sg-radius)# server 209.165.201.2 key radkey4
Device(config-sg-radius)# end
```

If all servers have equal transaction processing capability, one-third of all authentication transactions are directed toward the server 209.165.201.1. Therefore, one-third of all accounting transactions are also directed toward the server 209.165.201.1. The remaining two-third of accounting transactions are load balanced equally between servers 209.165.201.1 and 209.165.201.2. The server 209.165.201.1 receives fewer authentication transactions because the server 209.165.201.1 has outstanding accounting transactions.

Example: Configuring the Preferred Server with Authentication Servers As a Subset of Authorization Servers

The following example shows an authentication server group that uses servers 209.165.200.225 and 209.165.200.226 and an authorization server group that uses servers 209.165.200.225, 209.165.200.226, and 209.165.201.1. Both server groups have the preferred server flag enabled.

```
Device> enable
Device# configure terminal
Device(config)# aaa group server radius authentication-group
Device(config-sg-radius)# server 209.165.200.225 key radkey1
Device(config-sg-radius)# server 209.165.200.226 key radkey2
Device(config-sg-radius)# exit
Device(config)# aaa group server radius accounting-group
Device(config-sg-radius)# server 209.165.200.225 key radkey1
Device(config-sg-radius)# server 209.165.200.226 key radkey2
Device(config-sg-radius)# server 209.165.201.1 key radkey3
Device(config-sg-radius)# end
```

One-half of all authentication transactions are sent to the server 209.165.200.225 and the other half to the server 209.165.200.226. Servers 209.165.200.225 and 209.165.200.226 are preferred servers for authentication and accounting transaction. Therefore, there is an equal distribution of authentication and accounting transactions across servers 209.165.200.225 and 209.165.200.226. The server 209.165.201.1 is relatively unused.

Example: Configuring the Preferred Server with Authentication Servers As a Superset of Authorization Servers

The following example shows an authentication server group that uses servers 209.165.200.225, 209.165.200.226, and 209.165.201.1 and an authorization server group that uses servers 209.165.200.225 and 209.165.200.226. Both server groups have the preferred server flag enabled.

```
Device> enable
Device# configure terminal
Device(config)# aaa group server radius authentication-groupp
Device(config-sg-radius)# server 209.165.200.225 key radkey1
Device(config-sg-radius)# server 209.165.200.226 key radkey2
Device(config-sg-radius)# server 209.165.201.1 key radkey3
Device(config-sg-radius)# exit
Device(config)# aaa group server radius accounting-group
Device(config-sg-radius)# server 209.165.200.225 key radkey1
Device(config-sg-radius)# server 209.165.200.226 key radkey2
Device(config-sg-radius)# end
```

Initially, one-third of authentication transactions are assigned to each server in the authorization server group. As accounting transactions are generated for more sessions, accounting transactions are sent to servers 209.165.200.225 and 209.165.200.226 because the preferred server flag is on. As servers 209.165.200.225 and 209.165.200.226 begin to process more transactions, authentication transactions will start to be sent to server 209.165.201.1. Transaction requests authenticated by server 209.165.201.1 do not have any preferred server setting and are split between servers 209.165.200.225 and 209.165.200.226, which negates the use of the preferred server flag. This configuration should be used cautiously.

Example: Enabling VRF Aware RADIUS Automated Testing

The following examples show how to enable automated testing for a non-default VRF on the RADIUS server:

```
Device(config)# radius server myserver
Device(config-radius-server)# address ipv4 192.0.2.1 auth-port 1812 acct-port 1813
Device(config-radius-server)# automate-tester username user1 idle-time 2 vrf VRF1
Device(config-radius-server)# end

Device(config)# radius server myserver
Device(config-radius-server)# address ipv4 192.0.2.1 auth-port 1812 acct-port 1813
Device(config-radius-server)# automate-tester username user1 probe-on vrf VRF1
Device(config-radius-server)# end
```

Additional References for RADIUS Server Load Balancing

Related Documents

Related Topic	Document Title
RADIUS	"Configuring RADIUS" module in the *Security Configuration Guide*

Technical Assistance

Description	Link
The Cisco Support website provides extensive online resources, including documentation and tools for troubleshooting and resolving technical issues with Cisco products and technologies. To receive security and technical information about your products, you can subscribe to various services, such as the Product Alert Tool (accessed from Field Notices), the Cisco Technical Services Newsletter, and Really Simple Syndication (RSS) Feeds. Access to most tools on the Cisco Support website requires a Cisco.com user ID and password.	http://www.cisco.com/techsupport

Feature History for RADIUS Server Load Balancing

This table provides release and related information for the features explained in this module.

These features are available in all the releases subsequent to the one they were introduced in, unless noted otherwise.

Release	Feature	Feature Information
Cisco IOS XE Everest 16.5.1a	RADIUS Server Load Balancing	The RADIUS Server Load Balancing feature distributes authentication, authorization, and accounting (AAA) authentication and accounting transactions across servers in a server group. These servers can share the AAA transaction load and thereby respond faster to incoming requests. Support for this feature was introduced on the C9500-12Q, C9500-16X, C9500-24Q, and C9500-40X models of the Cisco Catalyst 9500 Series Switches.
Cisco IOS XE Fuji 16.8.1a	RADIUS Server Load Balancing	Support for this feature was introduced on the C9500-32C, C9500-32QC, C9500-48Y4C, and C9500-24Y4C models of the Cisco Catalyst 9500 Series Switches.
Cisco IOS XE Bengaluru 17.4.1	VRF Aware RADIUS Automated Testing	You can configure RADIUS automated testing for a non-default VRF.
Cisco IOS XE Cupertino 17.7.1	RADIUS Server Load Balancing	This feature was implemented on the C9500X-28C8D model.
Cisco IOS XE Dublin 17.10.1	RADIUS Automated Testing Probe-on	The **automate-tester probe-on** command starts a five-second dead timer after which a RADIUS packet is sent to the server awaiting a response.
Cisco IOS XE Dublin 17.10.1b	RADIUS Server Load Balancing	This feature was implemented on the C9500X-60L4D model.

Use the Cisco Feature Navigator to find information about platform and software image support. To access Cisco Feature Navigator, go to https://cfnng.cisco.com/.