

Planning Exchange 2003 front-end cluster

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Hello All,

I would like to get some feedback from folks having had a real world experience with the clustered front-end / back-end Exchange implementation. I am planning to build a front-end Exchange 2003 SP1 NLB cluster talking to a back-end MSCS cluster. Hardware for the front-ends is Dell 2650 with 2 GigE NICs on each server. Which NLB scenario is better for Exchange front-end? Should I use NLB with two adapters scenario? Unicast or multicast mode is better in this case? Should the NICs on the same server belong to different IP subnets? (I couldn't figure which NIC will host the heartbeat communications) Should I configure default gateway for both of them (typically you don't do that, but this case might be specific)? Furthermore, how will the Exchange communications take place? As I understand, both servers will appear in Exchange organization as separate servers. Should I configure something (virtual servers?) to make back-ends think that there is just one front-end, or the back-end communications do not use clustering feature and talk to each front-end node separately?

The existing MS documentation describes pretty well NLB feature itself and Exchange front-end / back-end topology itself, but is very blurry in the area of getting them together.

Thanks a lot in advance for advices and links,
Boris