Varnish HTTP cache

CONCEPTS

Varnish is a caching reverse proxy: clients hit varnishd, which answers from cache or fetches from the backend. Behaviour is set in VCL, changed live with varnishadm.

Client HTTP request
↓ vcl_recv
Cache hit: serve object
↓ miss
Backend fetch, vcl_backend_response
↓ store
Client vcl_deliver

RUN VARNISHD

varnishd -a :_<port>_ **-f** _<file.vcl>_
Listen on a port with a VCL file

varnishd -T localhost:6082 -S _<secretfile>_
Open the management CLI

varnishd -s malloc,_<size>_
Cache in memory, e.g. malloc,1G

VARNISHADM

varnishadm _<command>_
Run one CLI command

varnishadm status
Is the cache process running?

VCL MANAGEMENT

varnishadm vcl.load _<name>_ _<file>_
Compile and load a VCL

varnishadm vcl.use _<name>_
Make a loaded VCL active

varnishadm vcl.list
List VCLs, state and temperature

varnishadm vcl.show _<name>_
Print the VCL source

varnishadm vcl.discard _<name>_
Unload a VCL

BANS AND PURGING

varnishadm ban req.url ~ "_<regex>_**"**
Invalidate by URL pattern

varnishadm ban.list
Show active bans

BACKENDS AND HEALTH

varnishadm backend.list
List backends and health

varnishadm backend.list -p
Include probe details

varnishadm backend.set_health _<backend>_ **sick**
Take a backend out of rotation

varnishadm backend.set_health _<backend>_ **auto**
Return control to the probe

PARAMETERS

varnishadm param.show
List parameters and values

varnishadm param.show changed
Only non-default parameters

VARNISHSTAT

varnishstat
Live counters (curses)

varnishstat -1
Print all counters once

varnishstat -1 -f MAIN.cache_hit -f MAIN.cache_miss
Select counters (globs)

VARNISHLOG

varnishlog -g request
Group by client request tree

varnishlog -c
Client side only

varnishlog -q '_<VSL query>_**'**
Filter transactions

varnishlog -q 'RespStatus ⩾ 500'
Only server errors

VCL ESSENTIALS

backend default { .host = "_<host>_**"; .port = "**_<port>_**"; }**
Declare a backend

sub vcl_recv { ... }
Request arrives; choose hash, pass, purge

sub vcl_backend_response { set beresp.ttl = 5m; }
Set cache lifetime