

How to defend against slowloris Webserver Denial of Service Attack

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Like you can read in my previous post, there is a terrible DoS attack dating back, from the previous year. It's a real shit and it was really annoying for me to figure out that my Apache running on top of FreeBSD is vulnerable as well.

Therefore I needed desperately a fix, I was not really keen at the idea of installing mod_qos, because I really hate third party software to mess up my Apache official module list. Therefore I needed another approach, after some walk through google I found the following [How to best defend against a "slowloris" attack against Apache web server](#) There are a couple of pathways

to follow as you can read in the post above. However the one that fit me best was through: [Varnish state-of-the-art high-performance HTTP accelerator \(proxy\)](#), it's truly a wonderful piece of soft.

Installing it on FreeBSD was a piece of cake:

All I had to do was:

```
# cd /usr/ports/www/varnish# make install clean# echo 'varnishd_enable="YES"' >> /etc/rc.confAnd last but not least, I had to alter my /usr/local/etc/apache2/httpd.conf and change everywhere the Listen port to 8080 instead of the default 80, the same procedure goes for VirtualHosts ports as well.
```

Last thing to do was:

```
Restart Apache# /usr/local/etc/rc.d/apache2 restartStart varnishd# /usr/local/etc/rc.d/varnishd startThat's it now varnishd handles the incoming connections to my Port 80, and passes whatever thinks appropriate to the apache server. Hip, Hip Hooray no more slowloris worries!
```

Another possible approach to Apache Denial of Service issues is to limit the maximum allowed connections per host to be no more than 20.

On GNU/Linux this could be done with the following iptables rule:

```
# iptables -I INPUT -p tcp --dport 80 -m connlimit --connlimit-above 20 --connlimit-mask 40 -j DROP
```

On FreeBSD or OpenBSD with packet filter, you might bother to take a look at the following:

[Howto: Basic Denial of Service Protection Using PF](#)

But wait there is even more options to handle the slowloris DoS attack. It looks some enthusiast has created even Apache module that handles the loris attack, sources of the non-official [mod_antiloris module release as well as precompiled binaries in rpm can be obtained here.](#)