



Idaho Power Company

Idaho Power Company moved to SUSE® Linux Enterprise Server on an IBM® mainframe to improve performance and take advantage of virtualization. Consolidating servers has dramatically reduced hardware, software and administration costs.

Overview

Idaho Power Company, a subsidiary of IDACORP, Inc., is involved in the generation, purchase, transmission, distribution and sale of electric energy in a 24,000 square mile area in southern Idaho and eastern Oregon. Among the lowest cost per kilowatt of all national providers, the company serves a growing population of approximately 883,000 people.

Challenge

For an energy provider, keeping systems available at all times is critical, particularly when responding to power outages. Idaho Power Company was concerned about the reliability of its legacy servers and began exploring the advantages of moving to a mainframe environment for greater operational efficiency.

With an objective of proficient fiscal management, Idaho Power has continued to seek improvements to its IT infrastructure. In an ongoing effort to optimize its infrastructure and contain costs, the company saw the potential hardware and software savings by using virtualization in a Linux® mainframe environment.

Solution

Idaho Power determined that SUSE Linux Enterprise Server was a best fit because of

the Oracle® and IBM certified offerings on the platform. The company runs SUSE Linux Enterprise Server on an IBM zSystem® mainframe, as well as AMD® Opteron® and Intel-based servers.

“Novell, IBM and Oracle supported a 90-day free trial period that was extremely successful,” said Ron Keogh, IT Project Manager for Idaho Power Company. “We were impressed with the patch distribution and upgrades from Novell®. All of the parts came together, but the key for us was Novell’s robust support for SUSE Linux.”

Idaho Power worked with Novell Consulting® to implement SUSE Linux Enterprise Server on its IBM zSystem mainframe, as well as its AMD Opteron and Intel-based machines. Novell Consulting provided Linux experts for each environment and created documented processes so that moving forward, Idaho Power’s IT staff can easily set up new virtual servers.

“The entire Novell Consulting team was extremely knowledgeable and would sit with our Linux team to show them what was happening and why,” said Keogh. “Along with all the knowledge transfer, Novell consultants left us with documented processes to manage our Linux environment.”

Idaho Power Company at a glance:

Electrical energy provider for southern Idaho and eastern Oregon

■ Industry:

Electrical Energy/Utility

■ Location:

United States

■ Solutions:

SUSE Linux Enterprise Server

■ Results:

- Consolidated 30 servers to one IBM mainframe with room to grow
- Dramatically reduced server and software licensing costs
- Can add a new virtual Linux server in a couple of hours
- Increased system performance by 400 percent

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Idaho Power Company*



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Ron Keogh
IT Project Manager
Idaho Power Company

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Working with Novell Consulting, the Idaho Power IT staff consolidated 30 servers to its mainframe environment using a hosting z/VM operating system for a substantial reduction in server costs. This consolidation has also significantly reduced the company's Oracle licensing costs.

“With the help of Novell Consulting, we went from building a new Linux server in a couple of days, to just a couple of hours,” said Keogh.

Idaho Power now runs a variety of mission-critical applications on SUSE Linux Enterprise Server including payroll, tax and legal applications, and the databases for its outage management system, used to get the power on again in the event of an outage. With the cost efficiency of Linux and the virtualization of Guest environments, the IT staff now has a test environment paralleling production, which it can use to prepare applications before they go into production.

“Having virtual Linux servers gives us the luxury to test applications before putting them in our production environment,” said Keogh. “The environment's flexibility is far superior to that of a complete hardware system to mirror Test and Production. Our SUSE Linux Enterprise environment is also much more secure. We receive far fewer critical patches for our Linux environment than other operating systems, and they are much easier to install.”

Idaho Power lost one of its Linux administrators and it was at least eight months before the company found a replacement. Its Linux environment ran flawlessly in the meantime, running without an update or reboot.

“Within our computer environment, we hardly need to touch or reboot our Linux servers,” said Keogh. “We have far great stability and dependability with SUSE Linux Enterprise Server, which is critical for our business.”

Results

Using SUSE Linux Enterprise Server and virtualization, Idaho Power consolidated 30 servers to one IBM mainframe with room to grow. The IT staff can add a virtual Linux server in a matter of hours. Such consolidation has dramatically reduced both hardware and software licensing costs, providing an immediate return on investment.

Idaho Power now has a stable and reliable infrastructure that gives users access to resources four times faster than before. The company has also increased system performance to respond more quickly to customer issues and power outages.

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Contact your local Novell Solutions Provider, or call Novell at:

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