



SAP Community Network

The SAP Community Network was growing fast, from around 250,000 to almost two million registered users across the globe. SAP wanted to provide this important community with access to the SAP* NetWeaver* platform in a stable, reliable Linux* environment that would help developers explore the benefits of SAP applications for their own businesses.

Overview

SAP is one of the world's largest business software companies, with more than 50,000 employees in 120 countries. The company's principal products, including SAP Business Suite, SAP Business All-in-One and the SAP NetWeaver technology platform, are used by more than 80,000 companies worldwide.

Challenge

To encourage the use of the SAP NetWeaver application development and integration platform, SAP initially created the SAP Developer Network. This later expanded to a network of role-based communities dubbed the SAP Community Network, which now is the umbrella for five vibrant communities. This online collaboration environment is itself built on SAP NetWeaver, and gives developers rapid and easy access to code samples and technical data.

Hosted at scn.sap.com, the SAP Community Network (SCN) is a comprehensive content and collaboration hub for developers, partners, enterprise analysts, consultants and system administrators. By 2006, more than 250,000 users had registered and were active participants on the network.

The large and continually growing user numbers placed significant demands on the underlying infrastructure. The existing operating system struggled to maintain performance and reliability during times of peak workload, impacting the user experience and, by association, the perception of the capabilities of SAP NetWeaver itself.

Solution

The initial instance of the SAP Community Network was running on a 32-bit operating system. The 1.6GB limit on addressable memory space for each 32-bit Java Virtual Machine placed practical limits on how many users a given hardware footprint could support.

SAP looked for a 64-bit operating system capable of running Java Virtual Machines with larger memory spaces. The result would be a better service for developers, and reduced infrastructure costs on a per-user basis for SAP.

"We looked at the product availability matrix for SAP applications themselves and asked the SAP Managed Services teams for their view," said Matthias Boehmert, Development Manager for the SAP Community Network.

SAP Community Network at a glance:

A community of SAP experts, working for customers, partners and SAP Members collaborate on technical, business process and business intelligence topics.

■ Industry:

Computer services

■ Location:

Global

■ Products and Services:

SUSE Linux Enterprise Server
SUSE Linux Enterprise Server Priority Support for SAP Applications
Novell eDirectory

■ Results:

- Provided an online collaboration hub that can support 10,000 concurrent users
- Reduced per-user infrastructure costs
- Increased reliability and eliminated unplanned outages
- Established role-based access to ensure security

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Matthias Boehmert

Development Manager
SAP Community Network



“The SAP Community Network shows SAP customers how the SUSE Linux Enterprise Server solution can deliver success on a large scale.”

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Development Manager
SAP Community Network

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“Three key features emerged rapidly to make SUSE Linux Enterprise Server the right choice for the SAP Community Network. First, its 64-bit operating system had the advantage of relative maturity: some other Linux vendors were only just releasing their products, and the Java Virtual Machine for 64-bit Windows was not yet at version 1.4, making it unsuitable for SAP’s requirements. Second, SAP Managed Services was already successfully using SUSE Linux Enterprise Server to host systems for its clients. Finally, SAP had chosen SUSE Linux Enterprise Server as its reference platform for SAP software development, and 75 percent of all SAP customers running Linux use SUSE Linux Enterprise.”

The SAP Community Network team has added five further servers running SUSE® Linux Enterprise Server to the same cluster, providing a simple and reliable way to add capacity as it is needed.

To manage the ongoing growth of the SCN community and to offer users secure, role-based access to the site, SAP runs Novell® eDirectory™ to manage user identities and provide users with personalized access to the developer portal.

Results

Since the introduction of SUSE Linux Enterprise Server, the network has grown to more than 1.8 million members, with an average of 30,000 new members each month. Typically, some 10,000 users are active at any time, and more than 900,000 unique users log in each month. This makes the SAP Community Network one of the largest and most lively communities of its kind.

“We are very happy with the performance, configuration capabilities and reliability of SUSE Linux Enterprise Server,” said Matthias Boehmert. “It is much more stable than our previous operating system, which could sometimes experience crashes of complete nodes or even the entire landscape.

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The configurable memory allocation capabilities of SUSE Linux Enterprise Server enable the SAP Community Network team to ensure that each user is served efficiently. Effective exploitation of existing resources minimises the need to buy additional hardware.

“Many of our developers are working on complicated and extensive projects,” said Matthias Boehmert. “Easy and reliable access to the developer portal helps them to collaborate and share solutions with thousands of other users. The SAP Community Network shows SAP customers how SUSE Linux Enterprise Server can deliver success on a large scale.”

The services running on the SAP NetWeaver platform have expanded, and now include a complete range of Web 2.0 applications, such as blogging (with more than 4,800 active bloggers), wikis, forums (with 6,000 posts per day), documentation libraries, best-practice services and code libraries—for a total of 20 million page views per month!



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SUSE

Maxfeldstrasse
90409 Nuremberg
Germany

