



ELCOT

ELCOT migrated its entire IT infrastructure from Microsoft* Windows* to SUSE® Linux Enterprise Server and SUSE Linux Enterprise Desktop. Following the success of this project, the company is rolling out SUSE Linux Enterprise across 30,000 desktops and 1,880 servers in Tamil Nadu's schools. Already over 3,000 new PCs have been supplied to government offices with SUSE Linux Enterprise Desktop.

Overview

The Electronics Corporation of Tamil Nadu (ELCOT) has been procuring hardware and software for the various departments of the Government of Tamil Nadu since 1977. The organisation is also involved in consultancy, implementation, support and training—helping to meet the state's ambitious e-governance objectives. ELCOT is the implementing agency for the prestigious Tamil Nadu State Wide Area Network Project (TN-SWAN) at a cost of \$40 million. ELCOT is also in the process of commissioning the State's data centre and disaster recovery centre.

Challenge

As a provider of IT procurement services to the Government of Tamil Nadu, ELCOT's main objective is to offer the best possible IT solutions at the lowest price—maximising the return on investment of public money.

To perform this task effectively, ELCOT needs to take a leading role in the state's IT strategy. The choice of whether to move to a new platform depends not only on immediate pricing considerations, but also on the potential long-term hardware, software and infrastructure costs.

Tamil Nadu's schools were running Microsoft Windows on a large estate of ageing machines—1,880 servers and more than 30,000 desktops. The operating system was in need of a refresh, but a move to Microsoft Vista* seemed an expensive option, particularly because of the increased hardware requirements.

Solution

Working with Novell, ELCOT decided first to migrate its own in-house IT systems to Linux*, before attempting the larger and more ambitious roll-out to the schools and government offices across Tamil Nadu State.

"We had to be sure that the Linux solution would meet all requirements," said C. Umashankar, Managing Director of ELCOT. "We decided to test it on our own internal systems and make an informed decision about whether it would be the right choice for the schools and other government offices."

ELCOT was immediately impressed with SUSE Linux Enterprise Desktop.

"With SUSE Linux Enterprise, we no longer have any worries about viruses," said C. Umashankar. "This aspect of security used

ELCOT at a glance:

IT promotion, procurement and service provider for Tamil Nadu government

■ Industry:

Government

■ Location:

Chennai, Tamil Nadu State, India

■ Solutions:

SUSE Linux Enterprise Server
SUSE Linux Enterprise Desktop

■ Results:

- *Eliminated tens of thousands of proprietary software licences by moving to open source software*
- *Set up 1,880 servers and more than 30,000 desktops on Linux*
- *Reduced hardware costs by between 25 and 80 percent*

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Managing Director
ELCOT

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Managing Director
ELCOT

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to be a real concern, because we know of other e-government systems which have collapsed because of malicious attacks.”

SUSE Linux Enterprise Desktop quickly won over users by providing a high-performance, intuitive working environment with excellent stability and security.

“SUSE Linux Enterprise Desktop is a very attractive and user-friendly desktop environment,” said C. Umashankar. “More important, even non-technical users can install and set it up—there aren’t any of the driver issues that you can get with other varieties of Linux. We quickly became confident that user acceptance would not be a problem.”

ELCOT rolled out SUSE Linux Enterprise Server to the schools’ 1,880 servers, which are now 100 percent Linux-based. The company then worked with teachers to design a pre-loaded set of applications which could be delivered to the 30,000 new PCs, along with SUSE Linux Enterprise Desktop.

“All the new PCs that we purchase for the schools come pre-loaded with SUSE Linux Enterprise Desktop,” said C. Umashankar. “Novell has provided excellent support for training, helping us apply a Tamil voice-over to their computer-based training software, and delivering dual-language instruction manuals. The training is intuitive, and we are very confident that the new solution will be popular with both teachers and students.”

Results

With pre-built, virus-protected systems running open source software, Tamil Nadu’s schools have a low-cost, highly reliable infrastructure that promises to deliver real savings in the years to come.

“The open source software available in the SUSE Linux Enterprise platform is superb,” said C. Umashankar. “Another big advantage of Linux is that you can experiment with different applications without making big investments. We soon designed a suite of applications which will deliver all the functionality the teachers will need. We also have a 28-seat software development wing supported by SUSE Linux Enterprise on the server and desktop, fully powered by open source tools.

The high-performance SUSE Linux Enterprise platform will also protect ELCOT’s existing hardware investments, while alternative operating systems would have required more frequent hardware refreshes.

“We estimate that moving to Linux has reduced our general hardware costs by nearly 25 percent. In the case of high-end servers, the savings could be as much as 80 percent,” said C. Umashankar. “Even more important are the benefits for Tamil Nadu’s students. There is a growing trend towards the corporate adoption of Linux, both in India and elsewhere, so it will be a real advantage in the job market to have experience working with open source software. It gives us tremendous freedom and choice.”



For More Information:

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