



Porsche Informatik

Porsche Informatik had a costly and inflexible proprietary UNIX-based platform, and was experiencing support problems from its incumbent supplier. The company decided to move to SUSE® Linux Enterprise, enabling it to centralise its server infrastructure and gain access to the superior support structures of Novell®.

Overview

For 40 years, Porsche Informatik GmbH has offered IT services around automotive activities and the supply of related services. Some 215 employees deal with the development, introduction and ongoing support of dealer and import systems for the Porsche Group brands, as well as with financial and insurance services for end-customers. The systems of Porsche Informatik are currently utilised in 13 European countries.

Challenge

Porsche Informatik offers IT services all along the automotive supply chain—from the link-up of manufacturer systems and development of dealer and import systems, through to Web applications for end-customers.

To ensure reliability and availability, Porsche Informatik requires a highly stable operating system for its Web services and dealer management systems. The company's existing UNIX-based infrastructure was inflexible, and the licenses were expensive. Porsche Informatik wanted to find a new solution that would offer better reliability, flexibility and support at a lower cost of ownership.

In particular, Porsche Informatik needed to ensure high availability for customer-facing

systems. For example, the company provides a graphical Car Configurator tool used by Porsche and several other manufacturers. This tool enables visitors to the site to customise any vehicle to their own precise specifications and view the results in real time. Any loss of performance or availability for this service would reflect badly on the brand, potentially even resulting in a lost sale.

Solution

Porsche Informatik considered a number of options for its new operating system, before ultimately deciding on SUSE Linux Enterprise Server.

"Moving to a Linux platform was not simply an economic decision," said Anton Spitzer, Head of Infrastructure Services at Porsche Informatik. "We were keen to choose a modern, widely used operating system so that it would be easier to find skilled technical personnel with the expertise to support it. The growing popularity of Linux as a platform for major corporate IT systems made it a very credible option."

The company needed to be sure that its new Linux* environment would be backed by a supplier with sufficient resources to send engineers on site rapidly whenever required.

Porsche Informatik at a glance:

IT services provider for the automotive sector

■ Industry:

Services / Automotive

■ Location:

Austria

■ Solutions:

SUSE Linux Enterprise Server

■ Results:

- Accelerated centralisation of IT infrastructure*
- Reduced hardware and software costs*
- Increased system availability to 99.9 percent*
- Gained a superior support structure*

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Anton Spitzer

*Head of Infrastructure Services
Porsche Informatik*

“With SUSE Linux Enterprise Server we are achieving very high availability across all systems—giving our business users and customers the levels of service they demand.”

Anton Spitzer

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Porsche Informatik*

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“Having the right level of support is vital, and when you consider the various Linux distributions on the market, there is really only one that can be taken seriously for enterprise-scale deployments: SUSE Linux Enterprise,” said Spitzer. “Novell employs German-speaking engineers near our headquarters, so it is easy to get help when we need it—a level of service that most other suppliers simply cannot offer.”

Novell Technical Services helped Porsche Informatik deploy SUSE Linux Enterprise Server on approximately 50 Intel-based servers from IBM and HP. The new Linux environment supports a number of application and database clusters for the CROSS2 automotive dealer management system, as well as four IBM* Lotus Notes* servers, one Web server, and several development systems.

“We are very happy with Novell’s support—not only in terms of the resolution of technical issues, but also for strategic planning,” said Spitzer. “Novell is now helping us run a pilot of 64-bit Linux, and ultimately, we hope to migrate all our servers to this even more powerful platform in the near future.”

Results

By implementing SUSE Linux Enterprise Server, Porsche Informatik has been able to accelerate the centralisation of its IT infrastructure. Previously, each dealership required its own costly UNIX-based server to leverage Porsche Informatik services. Now, all dealers can access the same services via

a low-cost workstation, reducing hardware costs and increasing flexibility.

“With a more centralised architecture and the ability to rely on standard Intel-based servers instead of expensive proprietary hardware, the cost savings will likely be significant,” said Spitzer. “And of course, the various open source tools and utilities freely available to Linux users are helping us cut software licensing costs in other areas too.”

Although reducing the total cost of operations was an important factor in the decision to move to SUSE Linux Enterprise, Porsche Informatik’s main objective was to provide a highly reliable platform that could deliver crucial services 24x7.

“With SUSE Linux Enterprise Server we are achieving very high availability across all systems,” said Spitzer. “This robustness means that online services such as the Car Configurator are always working optimally when customers need them.”

Equally, Porsche Informatik now has a simple support structure to help resolve problems rapidly. With a strong presence in Central and Western Europe, Novell has engineers readily available to give advice and provide on-site support in critical situations. Moreover, since Linux is a growing power in the professional IT sector, it will be easier for Porsche Informatik to recruit staff with the expertise to effectively manage the new environment.



For More Information:

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