



University of Arkansas

The University of Arkansas is committed to preparing its students with the technical skills required for 21st-century jobs. Using SUSE® Linux Enterprise Server for System z*, the university offers an enterprise computing curriculum not only to its own students, but also to students and faculty worldwide.

Overview

The University of Arkansas is the state's largest and most widely acclaimed institution of higher learning with approximately 18,000 students and 800 faculty members. Ranked within the top 10 percent of research universities nationwide, the University of Arkansas offers students a variety of academic programs including business, engineering, education, arts and sciences, law, agricultural food, life, and sciences, and architecture. The university's Sam M. Walton College of Business is a nationally competitive business school.

Challenge

To prepare its students for technology-related careers, the Walton College of Business at the University of Arkansas made a commitment to incorporate enterprise systems and business intelligence software into its curriculum. The university wanted to teach courses on Linux*, SAP* and other enterprise systems and began creating partnerships with key IT vendors and large corporations.

The university's technology vision extends not only to its own faculty and students, but also to universities worldwide. As a result, the university needed a robust and scalable

platform to host large, enterprise systems and make them available to external users.

Solution

With an IBM* z900 mainframe, the University of Arkansas evaluated several operating systems before selecting SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for System z.

"SUSE Linux Enterprise Server appears to be the product of choice for Linux mainframes," said Dr. David E. Douglas, professor in the Department of Information Systems at the University of Arkansas. "Nearly all the Linux mainframes we know of are running SUSE Linux Enterprise Server. Novell also has strong relationships with both IBM and SAP, two of our other key partners."

With SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for System z running on an IBM z900, the university has a scalable platform for its SAP and open source applications and can provide a number of curriculum opportunities. Having a hosted site for Linux classes provides a ready-made environment for faculty and students. Students can select from courses on systems or applications such as Web development with Linux, Apache*, MySQL* and PHP.

University of Arkansas at a glance:

Nationally competitive research university

■ Industry:

Education

■ Location:

United States

■ Products and Services:

SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for System z

■ Results:

- Established stable Linux mainframe environment with zero downtime
- Created enterprise computing curriculum to prepare students for technical careers
- Rolled out curriculum to both internal users and universities worldwide

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University of Arkansas*



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Dr. David E. Douglas

*Professor, Department of Information Systems
University of Arkansas*

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“Linux is such a major component of today’s computing environments that we would be cheating our students if we didn’t expose them to an open source platform,” said Douglas.

The university has large, enterprise databases from companies such as Tyson, Dillard’s and Sam’s Club to give students real-world business computing experience. For example, a student might get an assignment to develop a Web application that pulls data from a database using open source software. The SAP Business Intelligence courses that rely on these databases are also in high demand.

“Our goal is to give students a competitive edge when they enter the workforce,” said Douglas. “The SAP courses are especially popular with all our students, whether they are in accounting, marketing or finance. Recruiters from companies that run ERP systems tell us that students who have taken our courses have a two-year advantage over people without such education and training.”

Using z/VM, IBM’s mainframe hypervisor operating system, the university can create multiple virtual servers on a single mainframe—each running SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for System z. This allows the university to share its resources with universities around the world. The IT staff allows other universities to create virtual servers on its mainframe to provide similar enterprise computing training for their students. To date, 50 universities have tapped into the z900 mainframe at the

University of Arkansas to access their SAP Business Intelligence implementation.

“SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for System z running in a z/VM mainframe environment provides a great benefit for faculty and students,” said Douglas. “Virtual machines created for external users on the z900 have this capability built in for faculty and student use which means the solution is easily shared worldwide.”

Results

Using SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for System z running on an IBM z900 mainframe, the University of Arkansas has obtained a robust Linux environment to provide an extensive enterprise computing curriculum with exceptionally high uptime. The university was the first to offer a Linux mainframe-related course for college credit.

Today, nearly 50 universities are using its mainframe to teach similar enterprise computing courses and the university expects that number to double in the coming year and include more than 3,000 students.

“Both Linux and mainframe skills are in high demand and we want to help our students qualify for high-skilled jobs,” said Douglas. “Without SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for System z, we would not be able to afford to offer a similar learning environment, much less be able to support it. Novell really understands the needs of the education environment.”



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