



Wolters Kluwer Italia

Wolters Kluwer Italia wanted to improve the flexibility, scalability and resilience of its SAP ERP environment, while reducing costs by consolidating its physical infrastructure. SUSE® Linux Enterprise Server with Xen* virtualisation technology enables the company to provision and manage virtual Linux* servers for SAP rapidly and easily, without requiring continual investment in new hardware.

Overview

With more than 19,000 employees on three continents, Wolters Kluwer is a major international publisher of information, tools and solutions designed to help professionals make the right decisions and improve their productivity. Its Italian division, Wolters Kluwer Italia, has 1,150 employees engaged in delivering solutions to accountants, tax consultants and lawyers.

Challenge

Wolters Kluwer Italia relies on a suite of SAP* applications to provide support for its core business processes in financial accounting, management control, sales and distribution, contract management, human resources and business intelligence.

The business was growing rapidly, and the existing SAP systems were beginning to show their age. Wolters Kluwer Italia chose to upgrade to a more recent release of the SAP software to take advantage of new functionality. The company decided to use this upgrade as an opportunity to review its entire IT infrastructure and decide on the best strategic direction.

“Our top priorities were scalability, flexibility and reliability,” said Carlo Capalbo, CTO of Wolters Kluwer Italia. “In addition, we wanted to consolidate our physical infrastructure as far as possible, to keep operational costs low. Virtualisation was a clear way to meet these objectives—but there are many virtualisation technologies available, and we needed to be sure that we were making the right choice for our business.”

Solution

Wolters Kluwer Italia evaluated a number of different hardware and software technologies before making its decision.

“Prior to this project, our SAP applications were running on proprietary hardware,” said Capalbo. “We were keen to avoid vendor lock-in in future, so we started considering open source options for the operating system. It was crucial to find a solution that was fully certified by SAP—and a vendor that could provide enterprise-level support.”

Of the open source operating systems certified by SAP, Wolters Kluwer Italia was most impressed by SUSE Linux Enterprise Server from Novell.

Wolters Kluwer Italia at a glance:

Publisher of professional information resources

■ Industry:

Publishing

■ Location:

Italy

■ Products and Services:

SUSE Linux Enterprise Server with built-in Xen virtualisation technology

■ Results:

- *Reduced hardware and software costs by migrating from a proprietary solution to SUSE Linux Enterprise Server*
- *Consolidated infrastructure with virtualisation*
- *Accelerated provisioning of new Linux servers for SAP applications*
- *Improved resilience by enabling rapid failover to a secondary data centre*

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Carlo Capalbo

CTO

Wolters Kluwer Italia

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“SUSE Linux Enterprise Server has always been a highly reliable operating system that delivers excellent performance,” said Capalbo. “The inclusion of Xen virtualisation technology made it an ideal choice of platform for our SAP environment, as it facilitates the creation and management of the numerous production, development and quality assurance servers that SAP requires.”

Wolters Kluwer Italia chose to implement SUSE Linux Enterprise Server on Unisys* ES7000 servers with Intel* Xeon* processors, and began to migrate its SAP environment from a proprietary solution to the new operating system.

“Instead of buying, connecting and configuring a new box every time we wanted to set up a new server, we just used Xen to create a virtual Linux server,” said Capalbo. “This was quick and easy, and minimised the problems that can be caused by incompatible hardware.”

The company has split its SAP infrastructure across two data centres at different locations to ensure business continuity. In normal operations, the physical servers at the main site run the production environment, while the second site provides the test, development and quality assurance environments. In the event of a server shutdown—planned or unplanned—at the production site, the company can immediately restart the relevant virtual machines at the secondary site, avoiding downtime.

Results

By moving from a proprietary solution to SUSE Linux Enterprise Server, Wolters Kluwer Italia dramatically reduced its hardware and software costs. As the SAP applications play a vital role in the majority of Wolters Kluwer Italia’s core business processes, reliability and availability are key concerns. With the virtualised SUSE Linux Enterprise environment, the company has been able to improve the reliability and serviceability of its hardware infrastructure considerably.

Besides reliability, SUSE Linux Enterprise delivers increased flexibility and scalability for the SAP environment. When Wolters Kluwer Italia needs to add a new application or database, it can deploy a virtual server in a matter of minutes—reducing work for IT teams and dramatically cutting lead times.

Equally, virtualisation enables Wolters Kluwer Italia to run numerous virtual machines on each physical server, so the company is able to utilise its hardware much more efficiently. As a result, there is less need to buy, deploy, run and maintain new server hardware, so the total cost of operation is reduced.

“Moving away from a ‘one machine per application’ infrastructure to a fully virtualised environment has given us the ability to respond more quickly to the needs of the business,” said Capalbo. “With support from Novell, SUSE Linux Enterprise Server will help us to increase agility while reducing costs for our SAP environment.”



For More Information:

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