



Kanton Aargau

With its Linux* server landscape growing rapidly, Kanton Aargau needed a more effective way to manage patching and updates. Novell® ZENworks® Linux Management provides simple remote installation of updates for the operating system itself, as well as for SAP* and other software products. As a result, a single employee can now manage the organisation's entire Linux environment.

Overview

Aargau, in northern Switzerland, is the country's fourth largest canton, home to more than 580,000 people. Aargau's government is responsible for a wide range of public services, including education and healthcare, and is supported by tax income of around 4.5 billion CHF per year.

Challenge

To meet the needs of its citizens in an effective manner, Kanton Aargau relies on key IT systems such as SAP and Oracle*. With an infrastructure based around aging technology, the IT department decided to rethink its architecture to meet the needs of modern applications and databases.

"We decided to move to a mixed infrastructure—with around 330 servers running Microsoft* Windows*, 75 running Sun* Solaris* and 65 running Linux," said Andreas Brütisch, Linux and UNIX Systems Specialist at Kanton Aargau. "We chose SUSE Linux Enterprise Server after an evaluation of several different varieties of Linux, and we were impressed with the support and training that Novell provided to help us with the migration."

However, as the Linux environment grew, the management of patches and updates became complex. Servers running SAP need different patches from those running Oracle, and keeping track of the requirements of each server was time-consuming for the IT staff.

Solution

"Initially, we tried using an installation server to fetch operating system updates from Novell and push them out to the various servers over the network, but this wasn't satisfactory," said Brütisch. "For example, most of our servers now run SUSE Linux Enterprise Server 10, but a few of the Oracle servers are still on version 9—and the installation server could not cope with this complexity. As a result, some patches weren't downloaded correctly, so we had to check each server individually to ensure that they were all up-to-date."

Kanton Aargau decided to invest in a specialised Linux management solution, and asked Novell for advice. Novell suggested working with NEXPERT, a Novell partner based in Switzerland.

Kanton Aargau at a glance:

Public administration of one of Switzerland's 26 cantons

■ Industry:

Government

■ Location:

Switzerland

■ Products and Services:

Novell ZENworks Linux Management
SUSE Linux Enterprise Server
Novell Consulting

■ Results:

- Improved security and reliability by ensuring that all Linux servers are fully patched
- Simplified patch management for Linux-based SAP environment
- Reduced workload—one full-time employee can now manage more than 50 Linux servers

"NEXPERT and Novell Consulting played a key role in the project, collaborating effectively with our in-house team to install the software and complete the rollout within just three months."

Andreas Brütisch

*Linux and UNIX Systems Specialist
Kanton Aargau*



“Novell ZENworks Linux Management is already an excellent means of simplifying server management and reducing administration for a growing Linux landscape. By extending it to SAP and other applications, its value for our organisation will continue to grow in the future.”

Andreas Brüttsch

Linux and UNIX Systems Specialist
Kanton Aargau

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“NEXPERT came up with a proposal very quickly, and it was clear that the solution could meet the needs of our business,” said Brüttsch. “We decided to go ahead with the implementation of Novell ZENworks Linux Management. NEXPERT and Novell Consulting® played a key role in the project, collaborating effectively with our in-house team to install the software and complete the rollout within just three months.”

Novell ZENworks Linux Management enables the IT team to assign a profile to each server. The profile defines what version of SUSE® Linux Enterprise the server is running, what service packs are installed, whether it is running in 32- or 64-bit mode, and various other options. Novell ZENworks then automatically selects the appropriate updates for each system, and downloads them ready for installation on the target servers.

“Some of our servers are physical, while others are virtualised using VMware® ESX—Novell ZENworks Linux Management can manage them all,” said Brüttsch. “The flexibility of the software is a major advantage for large Linux environments, since it can meet a wide range of specific requirements without creating extra workload for the IT team.”

Results

Novell ZENworks Linux Management has helped the IT department at Kanton Aargau reduce the time it spends on administration and maintenance of the Linux environment. As a result, one employee can handle the

whole workload of patching and updating servers himself, without assistance from the rest of the team.

Moreover, since the Novell ZENworks solution is so simple to use, different teams within the IT department can easily take over management of specific machines when the need arises—without help from the patch specialist.

“For example, some of the SAP systems require specific updates, and the SAP team knows more about the requirements than I do,” said Brüttsch. “Previously, I had to check with them every time a new update was released. Now they can use the simple Novell ZENworks Linux Management interface to see what updates are available, and check with SAP to see which ones they ought to install. It’s a much simpler process.”

Novell ZENworks Linux Management can do more than just install and update Linux operating systems—it can also manage the provisioning of other software. Kanton Aargau has recently started using it to deploy Java® packages for the SAP environment, and is planning to extend the use of this functionality in future.

“So far, we have barely scratched the surface of what the software can do,” said Brüttsch. “Even so, Novell ZENworks Linux Management is an excellent means of simplifying server management and reducing administration for a growing Linux landscape.”



For More Information:

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