



St Mary MacKillop College
supports students' growing IT
needs with SUSE

St Mary MacKillop College

Industry and Location
Education | Australia

Product and Services
SUSE Linux Enterprise Server
SUSE Linux Enterprise Server on
Amazon EC2
SUSE Manager

Success Story

At-a-Glance

With 40 instances of SUSE® Linux Enterprise Server (SLES) to manage, St Mary MacKillop College's team of five IT staff found it time-consuming and disruptive to apply patches and updates. By deploying SUSE Manager to automate most aspects of server management, the college is saving an estimated seven person-hours per month and also benefits from more secure and reliable systems. The college is now taking its first steps into the cloud with SLES on Amazon EC2.

Overview

St Mary MacKillop College is a Catholic co-educational school for students in years 7 to 12 of the Australian school system (from approximately 12 to 18 years of age). Split into junior and senior campuses 5 kilometers apart, the college is the largest in Canberra, with more than 1,850 students and 170 staff.

Challenge

St Mary MacKillop College migrated most of its servers from Windows to SLES several years ago in order to improve security and stability, increase flexibility and reduce costs. With around 30 servers in production and another 10 in its test/development landscape, the organization wanted



to minimize the administrative overhead of managing this growing infrastructure.

Brett Seivers, network manager, explains: "Adopting SUSE Linux Enterprise as our platform for staff, student and parent services had proved to be a great move, enabling us to improve uptime while cutting our software costs. However, as the environment grew both physically and virtually, our small internal team was spending too much time applying the same updates and patches to different servers."

The college aimed to find a solution that could automate most aspects of server management, so that it could dedicate its resources to supporting growing IT needs among students. A secondary goal was to find a fast and reliable way to set up new services without investing in in-house infrastructure.

Solution

St Mary MacKillop College opted to deploy SUSE Manager, a comprehensive solution for managing Linux systems

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Network Manager
St Mary MacKillop College

across diverse physical, virtual and cloud landscapes. SUSE Manager offers tools for server configuration and deployment, power management, compliance and security management, patch and update management and vulnerability management.

“SUSE Manager has made the management of our Linux landscape significantly faster and easier,” says Seivers. “Rather than having to schedule planned downtime during the working day for updates and patches, we can set them to run overnight or at weekends. That saves us a lot of time, and it also improves the accuracy of patching, helping make our systems more reliable and secure.”

All key services at St Mary MacKillop College run on SLES, including email, file and print, identity and access management, configuration management, web application, learning management and the IT help desk. By empowering the college’s small technical team to keep servers updated and free from vulnerabilities, SUSE Manager plays a vital role in keeping the college running smoothly.

“Our five IT staff support 170 staff, more

than 1,850 students and 2,500 parents,” says Seivers. “As we continue to roll out new services and extend them to students’ own devices, it’s a great help to be able to automate routine server administration through SUSE Manager.”

In the future, many of these new services may not run in-house but on the public cloud. To address its secondary goal of setting up new services without investing in in-house infrastructure, the college has recently deployed three workloads on SLES on Amazon EC2, an enterprise-class computing environment. SUSE maintains the base operating system images for Amazon EC2, providing updates as soon as they are available.

Results

The college’s first steps into the public cloud have given it more flexibility and speed in deploying new services with the potential to make savings on software and hardware.

“We’ve moved our external website, a directory server and an intranet site to the Amazon cloud,” says Seivers. “The key

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benefit so far is the increased network bandwidth and availability we get from being hosted in a large, enterprise-class data center. We will potentially move other services into the cloud, ultimately reducing our investment in local infrastructure.”

With SUSE Manager simplifying and accelerating the management of its 40 instances of SLES, St Mary MacKillop College is saving an estimated seven person-hours of work each month.

“SUSE Manager gives us a single point of control for applying all the necessary patches to selected servers and for scheduling those updates for times we’d rather be sleeping than working overtime!” says Seivers. “The solution makes it easier to test patches before we apply them, so the quality of our server management processes is higher, too. SLES is already very stable and secure, but with a number of critical services running on the platform, it’s great to know that we’re also deploying updates as SUSE makes them available.”

Benefits

- Eliminated downtime during normal working hours through automated patching and updates.
- Saved an estimated seven person-hours per month in patching servers.
- Improved security through accurate application of pre-tested patches.
- Achieved increase in network bandwidth and availability from hosting in Amazon cloud.

Find out how SUSE can help you become an innovation hero!

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