Supporting a Highly Available Digital Campus Commerce Solution

To support its innovative Campus Card solution, which provides university students with a simple, secure way to pay for goods and services on campus, Synjones chose SUSE® Linux Enterprise Server. The SUSE solution provides high availability for this critical payment service, enabling continuous 24/7 operations.

Overview

Synjones Group is a high-tech enterprise that provides software development, integration and support services. Headquartered in Harbin, the company has more than 20 locations, as well as a network of more than 400 partners and resellers. Its solutions include systems for intelligent water and power control, ID card reading, tax control and smart traffic—but its most important line of business is digital campus solutions for educational institutions across central China.

Challenge

Synjones has developed a highly successful solution for the education sector called Campus Card, which is now used by more than 70 schools and universities. Using the solution, students and staff can pay for goods and services on campus using a special card, which securely transfers the right amount of money from the student

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to the institution and eliminates the need for cash transactions.

"The Campus Card solution is at the heart of our business," said Mr. Wenzhi Lu, Director of Technical Service Centre for Central China at Synjones. "It was the first product we ever developed, and we have been continuously improving it ever since."

The original version of the solution ran on SCO UNIX, while version 2.0 used a combination of Red Hat Enterprise Linux and Rose HA, a high availability solution from Rose Datasystems. However, this solution was difficult to deploy and maintain, and did not always deliver the continuous availability required by Synjones' clients.

Solution

"We started looking for a different platform that would provide better high availability functionality," said Mr. Wenzhi Lu. "SUSE suggested that we should test our solution on SUSE Linux Enterprise Server, which includes a high availability stack that is fully integrated with the operating system. We saw this as an advantage because it avoided the need to buy two separate pieces of software. Moreover, it proved to be much easier to deploy than the Red Hat and Rose HA platform."

Following a period of comprehensive testing, Synjones became confident that SUSE Linux Enterprise Server could deliver the performance and stability required to support

Synjones at a Glance:

- **Industry and Location**
  IT services and solutions, China

- **Products and Services**
  SUSE Linux Enterprise Server

- **Results**
  + *Enabled Synjones to complete new implementations 50 percent faster*
  + *Increased total availability, with no unplanned downtime in 18 months of operation*
  + *Reduced software licensing costs by 25 percent*

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the Campus Card solution and provide continuous availability for its clients' students and staff. The combination of SUSE Linux Enterprise Server and IBM System x3650 M2 hardware also delivers excellent performance.

"The technical support that we have received from SUSE has been excellent," said Mr. Wenzhi Lu. "Our Campus Card installations can have anywhere from 10,000 to 100,000 users, so scalability is a critical factor. SUSE helped us to demonstrate that SUSE Linux Enterprise Server can handle even the largest of these environments without any problems."

Synjones has already migrated three schools onto SUSE Linux Enterprise Server, and intends to move the majority of its clients onto the new platform over the next three years. In total, this will mean that almost 80 institutions will be using the SUSE solution.

"We deliver the whole solution, including the cards themselves, the server and point-of-sale hardware, all the software, and the implementation and support services," said Mr. Wenzhi Lu. "Our clients don't want to know about the technical side of things—they just want a cost-effective solution that works reliably. So by improving availability and reducing maintenance costs, SUSE Linux Enterprise Server helps us deliver a higher level of service, as well as better value for our customers."

Results

Because functionality to create highly available Linux services is fully integrated into the SUSE Linux Enterprise Server operating system, it is much easier for Synjones to configure new environments and ensure rapid, problem-free deployment.

"With our previous platform, setting up the high availability clustering technology was a highly complex task, and implementations could often take more than a day," said Mr. Wenzhi Lu. "With SUSE Linux Enterprise Server, configuration can be completed 50 percent faster—which helps our implementation teams get clients up and running with the Campus Card solution very quickly."

The SUSE solution also eliminates the need to buy high availability software separately, which reduces licensing and support costs by around 25 percent.

"Since the software is less expensive, we can provide the same solution to our clients at a lower cost," said Mr. Wenzhi Lu. "The ability to deliver better value to the education sector is the key to maintaining our competitive advantage."

But most important of all, SUSE Linux Enterprise Server delivers continuous availability—ensuring that students and staff can access the card payment system whenever they need to.

"With our old solution we used to have a breakdown approximately every six months," said Mr. Wenzhi Lu. "But with SUSE Linux Enterprise Server, we haven't experienced a single moment of unplanned downtime since we first went live. The SUSE software helps our Campus Card solution deliver the high level of service that our clients require, helping us retain a high level of customer satisfaction."

Contact your local SUSE Solutions Provider, or call SUSE at:

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