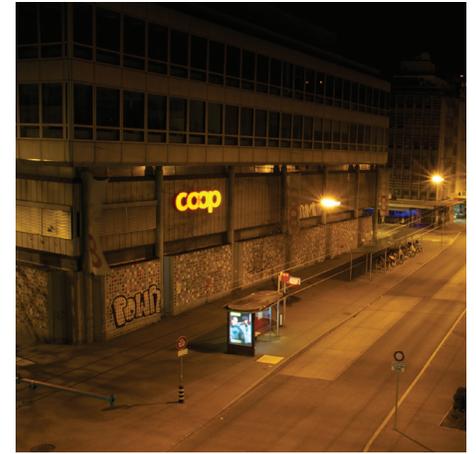# Coop (Switzerland)

To leverage the same modern and reliable platforms as Coop uses for its new point of sale solution, and to reduce maintenance costs, Coop (Switzerland) decided to migrate its Superbox info terminals from Windows to SUSE® Linux Enterprise. In a carefully designed rollout, all 1,200 info terminals were migrated to Linux in just 14 weeks. In the near future, the introduction of SUSE Linux Enterprise Point of Service will enable automatic software installation and updates.

Overview

Coop is Switzerland's largest retail group, operating under many popular brands including Coop, Fust, Interdiscount, Toptip, Lumimart and Christ. With more than 1,900 stores and 53,500 employees across the country, Coop has gained a 17.4 percent market share, and achieves annual sales of more than 20 billion Swiss Francs.

Challenge

For several years, Coop (Switzerland) has run a highly successful loyalty card program known as 'Supercard', which customers can use to collect points, obtain prizes, and pay for special offers. Supercard services can be accessed using 1,200 'Superbox' kiosks, which are located in Coop stores.

"We were running the Superbox info terminals on Microsoft Windows," explains Kurt Uhlmann, Head of Information Strategy/Architecture at Coop (Switzerland). "As part of our corporate strategy, we aim to standardize on one Linux operating system across the whole business, so we decided to migrate the Superboxes to SUSE Linux Enterprise."

Coop needed to plan the rollout carefully: to minimize costs, it was necessary to ensure that each machine could be migrated within 30 minutes—and this involved the installation of new printer hardware and a BIOS update, as well as the software migration itself.

Solution

Working with SUSE Consulting, Coop (Switzerland) used SUSE Linux Enterprise Point of Service to build a compressed image containing a cut-down version of the SUSE Linux Enterprise operating system and the 'Superbox 2' Java application, and configured it so that it could boot and install from a single CD.

The CDs were then issued to technicians, who visited each store to perform the migration. Once the new printer hardware was installed, the next steps of the process were to perform a BIOS update, install the new SUSE Linux Enterprise operating system and Superbox 2 application, check the network configuration, and perform a test of all peripherals. Finally, the kiosk would print out a summary of the successful migration, which served as documentation for the technician. The Linux install itself took just five minutes per kiosk, and the whole upgrade could be completed within 30 minutes.

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>
> **KURT UHLMANN**
> *Head of Information Strategy/Architecture*
> Coop (Switzerland)

Coop Switzerland at a glance:
Major Swiss retail group

- **Industry and Location**
  Retail, Switzerland

- **Products and Services**
  SUSE Linux Enterprise Point of Service
  SUSE Consulting

- **Results**
  + *Enabled migration of 1,200 info terminals within 14 weeks*
  + *Provided a faster, more reliable platform for Java and web applications*
  + *Increased standardization by running SUSE Linux Enterprise on both servers and info terminals in the shops*

"We were able to migrate all 1,200 info terminals from Windows to SUSE Linux Enterprise within a 14-week period, and the whole rollout went very smoothly," said Uhlmann. "The new application has a much more modern look-and-feel, and it is based on a service-oriented architecture which allows us to provide the most current Supercard data on the kiosks and point of service [POS] systems, and in the web shop."

The next step will be to introduce SUSE Linux Enterprise Server Point of Service for the info terminals, after the rollout of the company's 8,000 POS systems. The major advantage of this rollout will be a substantial reduction in maintenance workload: when a kiosk or POS system is replaced, the solution will detect the new hardware and automatically install the latest versions of the relevant software. Updates and patches will also be deployed automatically to all machines via the store network, so there will not be any need for technicians to visit stores except for hardware installations.

Results

One of the main reasons for standardizing on the SUSE Linux Enterprise platform was its resilience, and Coop has been impressed the new solution's stability.

"We haven't had a single issue with reliability, which confirms our belief that SUSE Linux Enterprise is a very stable platform for running Java applications," said Uhlmann. "Moreover, Linux requires updates much less frequently than our old Windows operating system, so our patching workload has been reduced by about 30 percent."

Coop also appreciates the advanced power management features of SUSE Linux Enterprise, which automatically power-down the kiosks' touchscreens overnight, while the shops are closed. This makes a significant contribution to reducing electricity consumption and helps support the company's Green IT strategy.

Above all, the new solution will reduce maintenance costs. By enabling remote support and automatic installation and updates, SUSE Linux Enterprise Point of Service will reduce the need for technicians to visit stores, and will also simplify the process when hardware needs to be replaced.

"Previously, we would install all the software at our setup center in Zürich, and then deliver the hardware to the stores for installation—a process which took about two days," said Uhlmann. "Now, since all the software installation will be done automatically on-site, we can reduce the process to a matter of hours. This saves time for our technicians, and ensures that when a kiosk breaks down, we can get it back into service much more quickly.

"We have enjoyed working with SUSE Consulting on this project, and we look forward to continuing to work with them on the POS rollout and future SUSE Linux Enterprise projects."