



Success Story

Server

Standard Media Group

Standard Media wanted to deploy an integrated ERP solution to enable more efficient and streamlined business operations. The company chose SAP ERP, deployed on virtualized instances of SUSE® Linux Enterprise Server for SAP Applications and administered using SUSE Manager. With built-in high availability and the ability to run an unlimited number of virtual machines (VMs), the SUSE platform provides a resilient, low-cost environment for SAP ERP that also offers high security and performance.



Overview

Standard Media Group employs approximately 1,000 people and is based in Nairobi, Kenya. The company owns a large number of national media platforms catering to the Kenyan public, including The Standard newspaper and the Kenya Television Network.

Challenge

Standard Media Group was using a variety of in-house and third-party applications to manage its business operations, typically running on Microsoft Windows Server. This made it difficult to gain a single, consolidated view of activities and performance and meant that users were often required to re-key data from one system into another.

Dominic Kebenei, IT Specialist at Standard Media Group, said: "We had outgrown our

previous approach to managing the various functions of the business and looked for a more integrated approach."

Standard Media wanted to deploy an enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution that would provide a shared core of functionality surrounded by specialized applications for finance, sales, marketing, HR, procurement and more. The company knew that such a solution would enable better visibility and control over its business.

Solution

"Both the cost and the functionality convinced us that SAP ERP was the right solution for Standard Media," said Dominic Kebenei. "Our SAP for Media solution provides not only the core functionality around finance, procurement, sales and distribution and so on, but also industry-specific modules for TV and radio programming, advertisements and outdoor media."

Deploying a system that touches so many areas of the business naturally makes it imperative to ensure the highest levels of performance, availability and security. For Standard Media, the obvious choice of platform was Linux, which provides the advantages of UNIX operating systems without the associated high costs and vendor lock-in.

"By providing a hardened operating system and a host of security features, the SUSE solution has enhanced our information security."

DOMINIC KEBENEI

IT Specialist

Standard Media Group



Standard Media Group at a Glance:

Based in the Kenyan capital Nairobi, Standard Media Group owns a number of media platforms including newspapers, television, radio and digital.

■ Industry and Location

Media, Kenya

■ Products and Services

SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for SAP Applications
SUSE Manager

■ Results

- + Offered lower costs compared to alternative platforms
- + Enhanced the security around business-critical systems
- + Enabled Standard Media to run unlimited virtualized machines at no extra cost
- + Reduced time to apply patches by 80 percent

“SUSE Manager reduces the workload of the sysadmin, making it easy to ensure resilience, security and high performance across large and complex virtual server landscapes.”

DOMINIC KEBENEI
IT Specialist
Standard Media Group

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“We considered Red Hat Enterprise Linux, but wanted stronger local support and training than they could offer,” said Dominic Kebenei. “Ubuntu we felt was not enterprise standard, and CentOS was not certified for SAP. SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for SAP Applications was the outstanding choice, particularly as it is recommended by SAP.”

Standard Media deployed SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for SAP Applications, which provides a pre-tested operating system tuned to support SAP ERP. It also includes integrated clustering technology: SUSE Linux Enterprise High Availability Extension. The SAP landscape is fully virtualized on VMware, enabling Standard Media to run a large number of production, test/development and QA instances on a small number of physical servers. The SUSE subscription model enables Standard Media to pay only for the host servers; within each host, it has the flexibility to deploy as many virtual instances as it requires.

Kipepeo, a SUSE partner in Kenya, provided end-to-end training for the Linux environment and also helped Standard Media deploy SUSE Manager to manage updates and patching across the virtual server landscape.

Dominic Kebenei said, “Kipepeo demonstrated great expertise around the deployment of SUSE in a virtualized environment. They were also very responsive, providing direct, on-site support.”

Results

“As a media company, security is a major concern for us,” said Dominic Kebenei.

“Linux offers fine-grained control over authentication and permissions, enabling us to give the right level of control to different sysadmins; as a wide-ranging business with many different teams, this is crucial. By providing a hardened operating system and a host of security features, the SUSE solution has enhanced our information security.”

What is more, the solution is proving highly cost-effective. With high-availability components for servers, storage and networking built into the solution, Standard Media has achieved the required resilience at no additional cost or complexity. The SUSE platform also copes well with the occasional power outages that hit Nairobi.

Dominic Kebenei said: “The SUSE Linux Enterprise platform offers excellent value for money. It effectively installs and manages itself, so we didn’t need to pay substantial extra fees to get it all working. Furthermore, the cost of the SUSE solution is lower than it would be with Windows for our large virtual server landscape.”

SUSE Manager enables Standard Media’s relatively small technical team to manage its large virtual server landscape and to apply patches and updates rapidly and efficiently. The team can test new patches on a single instance and then roll them out to all servers at the touch of a button, achieving an 80 percent improvement in the time taken to apply patches.

“SUSE Manager reduces the workload of the sysadmin, making it easy to ensure resilience, security and high performance across our SAP server landscape,” said Dominic Kebenei.



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