



Viollier uses SUSE to boost protection against emerging threats and contain costs

Viollier

Industry and Location
Healthcare | Switzerland

Product and Services
SUSE Linux Enterprise Server
SUSE Manager

Success Story

At-a-Glance

As its Linux systems grew in number and complexity, Viollier wanted to tighten security by enforcing regimented patch management while at the same time streamlining system administration. By working with Adfinis SyGroup to implement SUSE® Manager for its virtualized SUSE Linux Enterprise Server (SLES) environment, the company accelerated major patch updates by 84%, enabling better protection against emerging threats. In addition, the company streamlined day-to-day system management, saving time.

Overview

Viollier is Switzerland's leading health care laboratory, specializing in clinical diagnosis, pathology, cardiology, ART (Artificial Reproductive Technologies) and medicinal products. The company has 700 staff across 15 locations across Switzerland.

Challenge

Having moved from a classic physical landscape to a virtualized environment a few years earlier, Viollier took advantage of its newfound flexibility to set up new Linux instances to accommodate separate systems. Virtualization provided many advantages, such as making it easier and more cost-effective to run production systems separately from more volatile test systems, but it also caused the number of servers to grow sharply.



This development presented the company with a fresh challenge: how could it manage and ensure the security of its rising number of virtual machines without expanding its IT team?

Marc Karcher, project manager at Viollier, says: "We run approximately 50 instances of SLES. In the past, it was difficult and time-consuming to keep them protected by the latest security patches because we had to update each instance individually.

"When our partner Adfinis SyGroup gave us an insightful demonstration of how rapidly a bug like Shellshock can attack and devastate vulnerable systems, we knew that we had to find a better way to safeguard our environment."

Solution

Working closely with Adfinis SyGroup, Viollier deployed the SUSE Manager tool, which provides comprehensive, centralized, automated Linux server management.

“Previously, it took around 25 hours to apply major patches to our entire SUSE Linux Enterprise Server environment because we had to manually find, download, verify and deploy the patch individually on each server. Now, we can complete major updates within just four hours.”

MARC KARCHER

Project Manager
Viollier

“Adfinis SyGroup provided us with excellent training, showing us how SUSE Manager could help us patch our systems quickly and effectively,” says Karcher. “

Because SUSE Manager is easy to use, we can operate it without any external support.”

Now, Viollier has implemented an industrial, standardized approach to patch management. The company tests new updates thoroughly to detect and resolve any problems, then applies them to the production landscape.

“In the past, when we applied patches manually, it was difficult to gain an overview of which versions of software were on each machine and see where we needed to apply security updates,” says Karcher.

“Now, we can check the status of the company’s SLES instances at the touch of a button, see what’s going on and identify potential vulnerabilities.”

Results

With streamlined patch management supported by SUSE Manager, Viollier has

enhanced system security.

“If we were attacked by a bug like Shellshock today, we would be able to respond very rapidly,” says Karcher. “The advantage of working with a leading vendor like SUSE is that patches against emerging threats are created extremely quickly. Then, within 30 minutes of SUSE making the appropriate patch available, all of our servers can be protected. As data security climbs up the agenda for companies in all industries, it’s great to have the peace of mind that we are well-equipped to cope with emerging threats.”

Using the automation features of SUSE Manager, Viollier has also shrunk the time needed to apply new patches.

“Previously, it took around 25 hours to apply major patches to our entire SLES environment because we had to manually find, download, verify and deploy the patch individually on each server,” says Karcher. “Now, we can complete major updates within just four hours — that’s 84% faster. As a result, our systems are protected against new threats much more quickly.”

“SUSE Manager provides enormous benefits in terms of helping us enforce higher levels of security while keeping IT overheads down. It has made our lives so much easier.”

MARC KARCHER
Project Manager
Viollier

Building on its early success, Viollier is now planning to extend its use of automation in SUSE Manager to further streamline system administration. This will generate time savings for IT staff, helping Viollier to continue to grow its business without having to increase IT headcount.

Karcher says: “SUSE Manager provides enormous benefits in helping us enforce higher levels of security while keeping IT overhead down. It has made our lives so much easier.”

Benefits

- Slashed time to complete major patch updates by 84%
- Tightened security through regimented patch management
- Eased the burden of system administration

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