



Success Story

Integrated Systems Management

Wright Flood

Wright Flood had previously standardized on SUSE® Linux Enterprise Server for its robust, enterprise-quality platform and 24x7 service. But making updates required tedious manual work—after hours. Compliance audits—especially locating security patches to document them—were also time-consuming. SUSE Manager solved the problem, automating system management and enabling all Linux systems to be monitored and controlled from a single, central console.



Overview

At Wright Flood the sole focus is federal flood insurance and excess flood insurance through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). With a network of over 17,000 independent agents and almost 300 NFIP flood trained associates its FEMA-backed policies have assisted property owners to recover through more than 40 years.

Challenge

Five or more years ago Wright Flood standardized its IT environment on SUSE Linux Enterprise Server. The company had been using openSUSE®, but wanted an enterprise-ready, platform with regular updates and 24x7 service and support. The result was an IT environment with around

20 virtual server instances running SUSE Linux Enterprise Server and growing at a rate of two servers per year.

The company was happy with SUSE and its service, but experienced two problems. First, according to Hans Sczyrba, Systems Engineer at Wright Flood, “Rolling out updates was tedious. I had to touch each machine.” The process involved installing updates on the development, then the test and, finally, the production systems, testing at each level. What’s more, Wright Flood had a policy of not touching servers during business hours. “I did that work manually on evenings and weekends,” says Sczyrba.

Compliance with the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS) required quarterly audits documenting that the relevant security patches were installed and on which servers—another manual process.

Solution

Just as updates and compliance audits were becoming troublesome, a short presentation on SUSE Manager, especially two features, attracted Sczyrba’s attention at a local SUSE Linux Expert Day event. SUSE Manager automates server management,



We are flood.®

Wright Flood at a Glance:

Wright Flood is the largest writer of U.S. federal flood insurance administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the largest participant in the National Flood Insurance Program.

■ Industry and Location

Insurance, St. Petersburg, FL

■ Product and Services

SUSE Manager
SUSE Linux Enterprise Server

■ Results

- + Reduced update time from hours to minutes
- + Decreased compliance auditing time from a day to one half hour
- + Enhanced security and compliance by controlling updates.

“With SUSE Manager updating is a click-and-schedule process. It takes minutes instead of hours and hours after hours. I have a lot more time to work on issues on the engineering side.”

HANS SCZYRBA
Systems Engineer
Wright Flood

“I can get the supporting documentation for an audit done in a half hour with SUSE Manager. Previously, it used to take me at least a day. SUSE Manager is a lifesaver.”

HANS SCZYRBA
Systems Engineer
Wright Flood

www.suse.com

system provisioning and monitoring from a single, centralized console for faster, easier change control. It also simplifies compliance tracking, automatically confirming that servers have the latest security updates, checking system security configurations and examining systems for signs of compromise.

“A light bulb came on saying we could use this,” he said.

He started looking at SUSE Manager and asked a SUSE technical specialist to help him with a proof of concept. In two days, they got SUSE Manager up and running and tested all of its features.

“I really got an appreciation for the SUSE Manager updating functionality, especially the scheduling feature. I could select which servers received the updates and schedule them and also schedule the server re-starts for when the updates were done. The changes could occur after hours without my presence,” Sczyrba says.

From that time on, Sczyrba has been rolling out SUSE Manager as he upgrades each server to 64-bits. Currently, Wright Flood has 26 servers running customer-facing and internal applications—all virtualized—with a “hot” site in Wright headquarters in St. Petersburg, Florida, and a “hot” replication site in Atlanta.

Results

With SUSE Manager, Hans Sczyrba no longer has to plan his life around maintenance.

He applies updates to development and test systems once a week, or immediately if they are critical. Three weeks in a row he adds patches, and in the fourth week he checks that everything is working correctly; if so, he rolls out these patches to the production environment.

“With SUSE Manager updating is a click-and-schedule process. It takes minutes instead of hours and hours—after hours. I have a lot more time to work on issues on the engineering side,” he says.

PCI compliance is also simpler. SUSE Manager automatically tracks server changes and keeps a history, allowing Sczyrba to easily provide information on security patches to auditors without resorting to manual procedures. “I can get the supporting documentation for an audit done in a half hour with SUSE Manager. Previously, it used to take me at least a day. SUSE Manager is a lifesaver.”

Wright Flood and its agents and customers also benefit. One of the company’s goals is to be as secure and compliant as possible. SUSE Manager ensures that Wright Flood security patching is as near real-time as possible and complete, protecting customers’ credit card information.

But the biggest value for Sczyrba is the SUSE responsive service and support. In a recent support call, SUSE successfully handled the issue in a few minutes. “It really gives me peace of mind to know that I have the support,” he says.



To read more customer success stories, visit:
www.suse.com/success

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

1 800 796 3700 U.S./Canada
1 801 861 4500 Worldwide

SUSE
Maxfeldstrasse 5
90409 Nuremberg
Germany