INDIAN EXPRESS CHOOSES RED HAT SOLUTIONS TO TRANSFORM ITS LEGACY INFRASTRUCTURE INTO A FUTURE-READY PLATFORM

FAST FACTS

Industry	Media
Geography	India
Challenge	To transform existing legacy infrastructure into a future-ready solution, while protecting existing investments, and giving the group the foundation to accelerate cost effectively
Migration Path	Novell Netware 3.12 OS to Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5
Software	Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5 with Oracle 10g Database
Hardware	Dell PowerEdge 1900, 2800 and 2900 Server series, 64-bit Intel Xeon processors
Benefits	The implementation of Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5 has given Indian Express a highly available, secure, and reliable platform with freedom from vendor lock-in, and the ability to scale cost-effectively without subsequent investments in hardware.

INDIAN EXPRESS GROUP

BACKGROUND

The Indian Express group is one of India's most well-known media firms, with several popular publications to its credit. The group owns The Indian Express, which continues to push the boundaries of excellence in investigative journalism and uses the slogan 'Journalism of Courage.' The group also owns other newspapers in India including the Financial Express, a business newspaper focused on the Indian economy; Marathi language daily Loksatta; Hindi language daily Jansatta; and Screen, a tabloid focused on the Indian entertainment industry.

CHALLENGE

The India media industry is extremely competitive, and is constantly adapting to cater to changing consumer demands and technological developments. In late 2004, even as the Indian Express group was establishing new benchmarks in journalism, it was grappling to cost-effectively scale up its IT infrastructure.

As a national-level newspaper, the Express group operates across more than 19 locations in the country, and needed a robust IT infrastructure that would give it the ability to publish content quickly, without compromising on quality. Over the years, to gain a competitive advantage, the group had deployed a diverse mix of software and hardware, leading to a prevalence of islands of information, numerous point-to-point interfaces, and inconsistent business processes.

The group's backbone LAN servers were powered by Novell Netware 3.12 OS with the limitation of client licenses; while for its messaging needs the group used .cc:Mail 8.2. These applications were impacting the group's agility in an industry where speed is of critical importance, and were proving to be complex and expensive to maintain. It was clear to the group that it needed to evaluate a solution that would not only meet existing needs cost-effectively, but give the group the reliability it needed for the future.

"Our top priority was to ensure uniformity, standardization, and compatibility of operations, while building the IT foundation for us to accelerate quickly in the future without any limits – either imposed by technology or the vendor," said Tridib Bordoloi, CIO, Indian Express Group.

SOLUTION

While assessing the right infrastructure to power its future growth, four important considerations were made. "In the media industry, we cannot afford to have a downtime. Hence, high availability is a critical need. We also evaluated platforms with respect to the TCO, future readiness, and ability to scale," said Bordoloi.

In the end, the decision was made quickly due to the team's familiarity with Red Hat Enterprise Linux, having used the platform effectively for running its file and print servers. In fact, almost every member of the IT team in the group is trained on using and implementing Red Hat Enterprise Linux.

The group planned a series of modernization initiatives with Linux at the heart. The group implemented SAP on Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5 to streamline business processes, gain complete control, and achieve information transparency across the country. The Express group has deployed four SAP modules, which includes Material management, Media Advertisement Management, Finance and Control, and Media Sales and Distribution.

"The selection of Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5 was an obvious choice, as it fulfilled all the requirements we envisioned for building a future-ready platform. We are all for open standards, and did not want to be tied down to a single vendor. Red Hat gives us the flexibility to change to a different hardware platform, if necessary," said Bordoloi.

Further, with SAP certifying Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5, the Express Group is ensured that all the criteria necessary for full interoperability of Red Hat solutions with all modules of SAP are in compliance.

> **"With the Express Group always upholding the values of freedom of media, it is like open source meeting open minds"**
>
> Tridib Bordoloi
> CIO, Indian Express Group

BENEFITS

With ease of use, protecting existing investments, and the ability to scale cost-effectively without subsequent investments in hardware, Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5 has given the Indian Express group the ability to move forward with its business goals without any technology constraints. Like any other national newspaper, the smooth transfer of stories and pages within the organization, across locations is vital. Today, a complete workflow enables this while integrating agency feeds, and has the added ability to accommodate last-minute breaking news without compromising on quality of printing.

"In addition to high availability and reliability, Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5 gives us access to features such as clustering and virtualization that would otherwise have been possible through the purchase of additional third-party solutions," explained Bordoloi.

The group uses Oracle Real Application Clusters (RAC) 10g as the database, with Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5 as the platform. This combination provides the group increased flexibility and significantly reduced operational costs. For example, the Express Group can now dynamically provision nodes, storage, or CPUs to lower costs and improve utilization.

"With the combination of cost, flexibility, and reliability, Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5 has truly exceeded our expectations. When compared to contemporary solutions, the TCO is very low. More importantly, Red Hat's security features enabled through the Security-Enhanced Linux (SELinux) functionality, has given us peace of mind, vis-à-vis other platforms that are facing new vulnerabilities and threats almost every day," said Bordoloi.

What is also special about the Indian Express Group is that the group is a trendsetter in usage of open source technologies in India. From mail servers, file servers, SAP, and even the company's website, the group uses Red Hat Enterprise Linux at the backend. The list of accolades doesn't stop here. "The Indian Express Group happens to be one of the earliest users of SAP on RAC in the region," said Bordoloi.

"The Express Group has always been on the forefront of publishing high-quality articles that can positively change the society we live in. Hence, when it was revealed in a recent Network World test that Red Hat Enterprise Linux was named the Greenest Operating System, pulling as much as 12 percent less power than Windows 2008 on identical hardware, we were overjoyed with our choice and the small contribution we are making to make the world a better place to live in," said Bordoloi.

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