Hello! Magazine Leverages the Power of Microsoft and Novell Joint Virtualization Solutions for Data Center Optimization

Overview

Country or Region: United Kingdom
Industry: Media and entertainment

Customer Profile
Headquartered in the United Kingdom, Hello! Magazine is one of the most popular celebrity magazines available and is read by more than one million people worldwide each week.

Business Situation
Hello! Magazine was seeking a solution that would help them streamline their heterogeneous data center to increase flexibility and reduce costs.

Solution
With the assistance of Microsoft partner ANS Group, Hello! Magazine implemented Windows Server 2008 R2 with Hyper-V and SUSE Linux Enterprise Server from Novell, managed by Microsoft System Center.

Benefits
- More flexible infrastructure
- Increased server utilization
- Simplified management functions
- Greater operational agility

> "Microsoft and Novell virtualization solutions have helped us achieve a more manageable, dynamic infrastructure, which allows us to improve the quality of our service, scale our offerings, and reduce infrastructure and operating expenses."
>
> José Mosquera, IT Manager, Hello! Magazine

Hello! Magazine is one of the most widely read celebrity magazines available, reaching more than one million people worldwide each week. The company was looking for a solution that would help them increase their flexibility and reduce costs by streamlining their heterogeneous data center. By implementing Windows Server 2008 R2 with Hyper-V and SUSE Linux Enterprise Server from Novell, Hello! Magazine now has a more flexible infrastructure, enabling increased server utilization, easy redeployment of server resources, and improved business continuity. Microsoft and Novell solutions enable Hello! Magazine's IT administrators to simplify management functions through a single, common set of tools, which provides greater operational agility and allows the company to more easily scale with future business needs.

Situation

Hello! Magazine is an online and weekly print entertainment magazine, providing the latest news on the world of celebrities, fashion, film, music, health, and more. This fast-paced company needed a data center solution that could match its business tempo, providing a flexible and dynamic infrastructure. The organization was operating a heterogeneous data center environment and was looking for new solutions that would allow them to more easily manage their systems. With the existing server infrastructure, it was difficult to add new solutions as they often necessitated the purchase of new or dedicated hardware. This would require funding approval from the separate operational headquarters and often there was hesitation to implement new solutions due to the potential for interoperability issues with the existing infrastructure. Additionally, Hello! Magazine wanted to ensure consistent business continuity, as well as explore uptime improvements. In their former configuration, if a system went down, users experienced disrupted service, leading to costly downtime. And finally, Hello! Magazine wanted to find solutions that would help to reduce data center costs.

Solution

Microsoft partner ANS Group worked closely with Hello! Magazine to create a proof of concept (POC) to demonstrate the benefits of virtualization for their business. At the time, Hello! Magazine did not utilize any virtualization and the POC illustrated the potential cost savings and improvements in efficiencies that could be realized through a virtualized environment. The clear success of the POC empowered Hello! Magazine to move immediately to a full implementation and the company worked with ANS Group to deploy nine virtual servers running on Windows Server® 2008 R2 with Hyper-V™ and hosting both Linux and Windows virtual machines.

Benefits

The new platform helped solve many of Hello! Magazine's interoperability and workload challenges, creating greater flexibility and efficiency in the data center. Through Hyper-V, the organization was able to increase server utilization by enabling multiple platforms to run in parallel on a single server. This ability allowed Hello! Magazine to consolidate their physical servers, retiring or repurposing approximately 50 percent of their older systems. For example, their new back-up solution required a dedicated server — and Hello! Magazine was able to use a decommissioned server that was left over from virtualization efforts. By streamlining throughput, the data center was able to increase capacity and improve response times by load balancing across resources.

Maintenance of the heterogeneous infrastructure has also been simplified with IT administrators now able to manage systems with a single, common set of tools. Testing, updates, and troubleshooting can now be performed on systems without an interruption of service, and applications and workloads can be segmented and reallocated to other servers resulting in high availability, which has dramatically improved business continuity. With greater operational agility, Hello! Magazine can better serve users and has an infrastructure that can scale to future business needs as the magazine continues to grow.

"Microsoft and Novell virtualization solutions have improved our quality of service, and helped us to achieve a more manageable, dynamic infrastructure," said José Mosquera, IT Manager, Hello!

> "We would recommend that customers running Windows and Linux together consider the benefits of this groundbreaking alliance."
>
> Paul Sweeney
> CEO, ANS Group

Magazine. "With this new infrastructure flexibility, we will be able to scale our offerings to our users. The solution has been a great success in every sense, with the users not only recognizing the performance improvements but also the implementation being seamless."

The implementation of SUSE Linux Enterprise from Novell and Microsoft Windows Server 2008 R2 has also resulted in significant cost savings. With the consolidation of resources, new server procurement has been reduced, allowing the company to spend that money in other valuable areas of the business. Hello! Magazine has also seen their data center electrical expenses decrease. "The Microsoft and Novell solutions have provided a financial benefit to the company, reducing infrastructure and operating expenses, and enabling us to reallocate the extra funds to other valuable areas of the business," noted Mosquera. Additionally, due to the fact that they now use less equipment in their data center, Hello! Magazine has found that they can reduce the amount of space that they need to rent for their physical infrastructure.

"We have been extremely pleased to work with Microsoft and Novell to offer joint interoperability solutions which address key customer issues for integrating Windows and Linux technology environments," said Paul Sweeney, CEO, ANS Group. "Customers regularly ask us for best-of-breed cross-platform solutions and now we are implementing system management and virtualization solutions that leverage the technology investments of these companies. We would recommend that customers running Windows and Linux together consider the benefits of this groundbreaking alliance."

Lastly, by standardizing on Microsoft and Novell joint solutions, Hello! Magazine has confidence in the interoperability of their mixed-source IT environment. The organization has intellectual property (IP) peace of mind from the commitment Microsoft and Novell have made to bridge the gap between open source and proprietary software.

"Microsoft virtualization and management solutions, working with Novell technology, provide all the necessary functionality we require to run a successful business at a cost and level of savings that are compelling," said Mosquera. "We would recommend this solution to any company looking to consolidate and virtualize their IT infrastructure."

For More Information

For more information about Microsoft products and services, call the Microsoft Sales Information Center at (800) 426-9400. In Canada, call the Microsoft Canada Information Centre at (877) 568-2495. Customers in the United States and Canada who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can reach Microsoft text telephone (TTY/TDD) services at (800) 892-5234. Outside the 50 United States and Canada, please contact your local Microsoft subsidiary. To access information using the World Wide Web, go to: www.microsoft.com

For more information about Novell products and services, visit the Web site at: www.novell.com.

For more information about Hello! Magazine products and services, visit the Web site at: www.hellomagazine.com.

For more information about ANS Group products and services, visit the Web site at: www.ansgroup.co.uk.

The Microsoft-Novell Agreement

On Nov. 2, 2006, Novell and Microsoft announced a series of agreements to jointly build, market, and support new solutions to improve interoperability, deliver powerful new virtualization capabilities, make Microsoft and Novell products work better together, and give customers peace of mind that both companies stand behind the products they deliver. More information about the Microsoft and Novell agreement, including other customer announcements, can be found at http://www.moreinterop.com.

About Novell

Novell delivers infrastructure software for the open enterprise. Novell is a leader in enterprise-wide operating systems based on Linux and open source and provides the enterprise management services required to operate mixed IT environments. Novell helps customers minimize cost, complexity and risk, allowing them to focus on innovation and growth.

About ANS Group

ANS Group is a technology infrastructure specialist in the provision of hardware, software and 24/7 managed services to enterprise businesses. Operating within both public and private sectors, the company's solutions help to simplify and streamline the IT infrastructure within the organizations of its 400-strong customer base.

Software and Services
- Microsoft Server Product Portfolio
  - Windows Server 2008 R2 Standard
- Technologies: Hyper-V

Partners
- SUSE Linux Enterprise Server from Novell

Microsoft®