

Open Platform of Microsoft Enables Metrabyte to Offer More Varied Hosting Services and Packages

Customer Solution Case Study

METRABYTE

Overview

Country: Thailand
Industry: Hosting

Customer Profile

Founded in 2006, Metrabyte Limited operates an integrated web hosting business, offering Windows and Linux-based platforms, domain name registration service, server co-location, website design and maintenance, server space rental and Virtual Private Server service.

The company's web hosting service can be classified into three parts by the features and formats of its services which include:

- Hosting Dynamo (www.hostingdynamo.com):
A web hosting service based on Windows platform.
- Hosting Lotus (www.hostinglotus.com):
A service for clients requiring Linux-based platform web hosting.
- Metrabyte (www.metrabyte.co.th):
An extensive range of services to clients, all platforms offer are supported by Metrabyte service, which is a VPS on both Windows and Linux-based platforms.

Situation:

At the beginning, around 50 per cent of Metrabyte clients were unable to develop websites on their own and relied on the Content Management System (CMS) website template. Moreover they thought that website development must be based on Linux platform to make it easier for them, since the platform supports a wide range of applications. As a matter of fact, Windows Server is a platform that also supports collaboration with various website templates and applications, including Joomla and Wordpress. Furthermore, Windows Web Server has advantages over Linux in terms of its flexibility and support to .Net, .ASP, .PHP, Microsoft[®] SQL, Microsoft[®] Access and MySQL data bases.

Microsoft released the Microsoft[®] Windows Server 2008 R2 that comes with IIS7.5 web server application with enhanced openness. The more openness does not mean open source technology, but it is a technology with openness, which allows Microsoft technology to better collaborate with clients' existing software, regardless of developers or technology. Therefore, it can collaborate with other platforms to streamline IT management and minimize future problems on Vendor Lock-in.

Solutions:

- Microsoft[®] Windows Server 2008 R2

Feedback on Microsoft technology

By transferring to Microsoft[®] Windows Server 2008 R2, Metrabyte has gained advantage in various aspects. An ability to work with what is already there and what is yet to come is the advantage. It enhances flexibility in IT management by allowing it to work with other platforms. Furthermore, new clients with website development on Windows platform have more options and new features, while current customers can continue on without platform transition. Metrabyte, as well, is equipped with more competence in serving clients such as adapting service packages to match with customer usage with reasonable prices and to holistically meet with needs of customers.

METRABYTE



“Microsoft platform has been more open to support collaboration with PHP and open source applications. This presents more alternatives to our clients. Meanwhile, current Linux-based hosting clients can immediately transfer to Windows-based Hosting, to enjoy benefits of new features, enhanced capacity and more support to new application with improved security due to consistent updating from Microsoft”.

Pantawat Artsirimanachai (Right),
IT Consultant,
Metrabyte Co., Ltd.

Customer profile

Founded in 2006, Metrabyte Limited operates an integrated web hosting business, offering Windows and Linux-based platforms, domain name registration service, server co-location, website design and maintenance, server space rental and Virtual Private Server service.

Currently, Metrabyte serves a total of 20,000 clients, including general customers and SMEs, which are regarded as the largest group of IT clients in Thailand. Metrabyte is also in the forefront of the web hosting industry in Thailand by its significant number of SMEs clients.

The company's web hosting service can be classified into three parts by the features and formats of its services which include:

- Hosting Dynamo (www.hostingdynamo.com): A web hosting service based on Windows platform. It has been available since the first year of the company's establishment as the company possesses high expertise and know how on Windows Server.
- Hosting Lotus (www.hostinglotus.com): is a service for clients requiring Linux-based platform web hosting.
- Metrabyte (www.metrabyte.co.th) To offer an extensive range of services to clients, all platforms offer are supported by Metrabyte service, which is a VPS on both Windows and Linux-based platforms.

Microsoft[®]

“Developing a website on Windows platform is comparable to working on Linux platform, in terms of support, maintenance of hosting, database and email server. All systems can be integrated by a single server, enabling clients to reduce miscellaneous charges; just a one time investment is needed. Meanwhile, developing a website on Linux, despite being free of charge, still has limitations on system updates, which is significantly behind that of paid licenses. Plus, Linux licensing fees may be higher or incomparable to that of Windows, when compared time and usage.”



Pantawat Artsirimanachai (Right),
IT Consultant,
MetrabYTE Co., Ltd.

Misconception causes Windows to be overlooked

At the beginning, around 50 per cent of MetrabYTE clients were unable to develop websites on their own and relied on the Content Management System (CMS) website template. Moreover they thought that website development must be based on Linux platform to make it easier for them, since the platform supports a wide range of applications. As a matter of fact, Windows Server is a platform that also supports collaboration with various website templates and applications, including Joomla and Wordpress. Furthermore, Windows Web Server has advantages over Linux in terms of its flexibility and support to .Net, .ASP, .PHP, Microsoft® SQL, Microsoft® Access and MySQL data bases.

Despite the less expensive cost incurred, working on a Linux-based platform cannot support large scale databases or sophisticated features. Furthermore, a Linux-based platform cannot support file names in Thai. These were limitations faced by service operators and there seems to be no better solution nowadays.

On the other hand, the misconception of the Windows-based platform is mainly due to the fact that people associate it with Microsoft® Windows Server 2003, the older version of the server. There is also a wrong understanding of the 40,000 baht license charge for using Windows Server, in fact the charge is for enterprise level license fee. Microsoft offers a wide variety of software formats for users and enterprises to choose from to best match their usage, including rentals called SPLA (Microsoft Services

Provider License Agreement). Presently, the charge for a Virtual Private Server, including Windows Server 2008 R2 license starts at only 800 baht per month. The charge also includes hardware, software and after sales service.

Solution for progress with more opening platform

Microsoft released the Microsoft® Windows Server 2008 R2 that comes with IIS7.5 web server application with enhanced openness. The more openness does not mean open source technology, but it is a technology with openness, which allows Microsoft technology to better collaborate with clients' existing software, regardless of developers or technology. Therefore, it can collaborate with other platforms to streamline IT management and minimize future problems on Vendor Lock-in.

With Microsoft's enhanced support to working on open source platforms and a wide range of technologies, PHP in particular, MetrabYTE realized this as an opportunity to provide new clients, who develop their websites on Windows platforms with more options, while gaining advantages from new features. While existing clients for Windows-based webhosting could seamlessly continue to benefit without transforming to a new platform. Furthermore, this also helps to add channels and enhance efficiency for the operator itself in realizing sales opportunities.

“I believe that Windows will see a rapid growth, particularly when customers can use the license for rental at only 700 - 800 baht fee per month, while receiving IT support. This is regarded as a cost effective investment for clients, who no longer need to install servers at their office. Despite being free of charge, Linux may not be a worthy investment as clients need to wait for uncertain patch updates from communities.”

Pantawat Artsirimanachai,
IT Consultant,
Metrabyte Co., Ltd.

Taking into account Microsoft's approaches and systems that lead to more openness, as well as the company policy to replace old servers every three years with priority placed on cost effectiveness and better efficiency for clients, Metrabyte finally decided to replace all existing servers with Microsoft® Windows Server 2008 R2.

Clients using Linux-based platform web hosting service who wanted to transfer to Windows-based platform could transfer to the new platform immediately. They could also utilize new features with enhanced capacity and support to new application with a more secure system, thanks to consistent and responsive updates from Microsoft. Linux-based platform web, despite being free of charge, still has limitations on system updates and security systems, which lag behind those Linux-based platforms with licensing fees, which are relatively higher or comparable with that of Windows, when considering turnaround time and usage.

Microsoft's Open Platform Increases Alternatives in Service for Client of Metrabyte

By transferring to Microsoft® Windows Server 2008 R2, Metrabyte has gained advantage in various aspects. An ability to work with what is already there and what is yet to come is the advantage. It enhances flexibility in IT management by allowing it to work with other platforms. Furthermore, new clients with website development on Windows platform have more options and new features, while current customers can continue on without platform transition. Metrabyte, as well, is equipped with more

competence in serving clients such as adapting service packages to match with customer usage with reasonable prices and to holistically meet with needs of customers.

Moreover, Microsoft's open platform can save hours in work and maintenance. Numbers of servers that were needed in the past can be reduced to one server for the complete new system. This leads to no additional costs as all can be done with one investment. The company can reduce time as well as cost.

Metrabyte also offers new e-commerce service by using NopCommerce which is an application on open source platform that can be used and developed by software developers on Windows platform.

NopCommerce is a web template for e-commerce usage with complete ready for use functions. It is an open source application that can be developed without restraints to full e-commerce system with stock system, point of sales, promotion, billing system and sales report. Metrabyte has brought that into development in order to meet the needs of customers. With Windows platform, NopCommerce application usage as well as large database size is supported. On the other hand, e-commerce websites that uses PHP on Linux cannot support large sized databases.

Additional information

For more information on Microsoft products and services, please visit:

<http://www.microsoft.com/thailand>

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Future Plan

As Microsoft advances in open platform development with ability to operate across platforms, Metrabyte will be able to offer various types of packages and services to customers as well. Currently, Metrabyte is also planning on offering more variety on packages and promotions for future customers.

The mentioned change will impact hosting service, whether on Windows or Linux platform, to be more interesting. The ratio of decisions made by customers will also be affected. Customers will get to use new features and work across more diverse platforms.

Presently, Microsoft is the software provider with the largest client base. By opening up the technology, Microsoft benefits all parties. It increases the chance of success for IT operators in selling and creating new partners. Moreover it opens up new and different perspectives for software developers and a new IT generation that can use the strength of open source to take full advantage of the ecological system and IT industry of the country.



Windows Server 2008 R2

Software & Service:

- Microsoft® Windows Server 2008 R2