



ODYSSEY LOGISTICS & TECHNOLOGY MIGRATES FROM UNIX TO RED HAT ENTERPRISE LINUX ON INTEL® XEON® BASED SERVERS TO RUN MISSION-CRITICAL SUPPLY CHAIN OPERATIONS

FAST FACTS

Company	Odyssey Logistics & Technology (OL&T)
Industry	Transportation: Managed logistics services for the chemicals and process industries
Geography	Headquartered in Danbury, Connecticut with international offices in North America and Europe
Business Challenge	Needed to cost-effectively scale its infrastructure to meet exponential growth in the business
Software	Red Hat Enterprise Linux, Red Hat Network Satellite, Oracle Database, Oracle ProC
Hardware	33 multi-core Intel® Xeon® processor based IBM xSeries servers
Migration Path	HP-UX and Microsoft Windows to Red Hat Enterprise Linux and multi-core Intel Xeon processor based servers
Benefits	Ability to add transaction processing and storage capacity quickly and cost-effectively as business continues to expand. Ensures uptime and reliability to customers relying on Odyssey Logistics & Technology to run mission-critical supply chain operations



BACKGROUND

Odyssey Logistics & Technology provides global logistics management services to the chemical industry and other process manufacturers. OL&T delivers a comprehensive portfolio of logistics services to the chemicals and process industries so that clients' products are delivered safely, reliably and economically, with the advantage of shipment visibility and actionable data across all modes.

OL&T presents a unique scope of industry knowledge, experience and technology, applied to client supply chain operations in two distinct outsourced logistics contexts: Managed Logistics Services and Third Party Services. The OL&T team of chemical engineers and logisticians brings unparalleled expertise—they are chemical and process industry insiders, intimately familiar with the supply chain complexities and hazardous materials requirements. Its technology backbone, the Odyssey Global Logistics PlatformSM features a net-native transportation management infrastructure that supports highly integrated, flexible and data-rich service offerings.

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

In 2005, OL&T ran its business primarily on HP-UX and Windows systems. But that infrastructure simply couldn't support a business growing as fast as OL&T's. First, there were cost issues. Adding proprietary RISC/UNIX hardware to handle its rapidly rising transaction volumes was prohibitively expensive. "So we began looking at ways we could handle growth by using standard based servers rather than simply buying more UNIX boxes," said Brad Massey, director, IT Support Services for OL&T.

Then there was reliability. As OL&T's customer list grew to include some of the largest and most recognizable names in the chemical industry, it simply couldn't afford any downtime.

"UNIX and Windows are not the friendliest environments to operate," said Massey. "With the growth we were experiencing, we had a lot of concerns about the stability and scalability of our systems. We needed to make sure we could handle all of the new customers we were implementing."

According to Massey, the impact of downtime would be serious to OL&T's customers. "We're integrated right into our customers' supply chain operations, and have to respond in real time to their needs 24/7," he said. "We're mission-critical to them, which means that having a stable infrastructure is mission-critical to us," he said.

Over the past three years, OL&T has seen an 83% compounded growth rate in transactions through the system. Given the firm's rapid rate of growth, the ability to scale was critical. OL&T decided it needed to implement a virtualized environment so that it would be able to scale on-demand.

SOLUTION

To address all these challenges, OL&T decided to do a complete infrastructure "refresh" that involved migrating all of its HP-UX and most of its Windows systems over to Red Hat Enterprise Linux running on Intel Xeon based servers.

Today, OL&T deploys Red Hat Enterprise Linux running on IBM xSeries servers and virtualized on IBM 3850 M2 servers. It also implemented Red Hat Satellite to manage provisioning and administration of its Red Hat systems.

"Through our use of Red Hat Satellite, Odyssey has realized: centralized configuration management and compliance, faster patch deployment and more streamlined server deployment," said Massey.

On the decision to move to Red Hat over other Linux distributions, Massey said there was hardly any discussion at all. "Red Hat is the market leader, period," he said. "Migrating to Linux was synonymous with migrating to Red Hat."

Though the majority of the company's mission-critical systems have been migrated to Red Hat Enterprise Linux, the deployment is "ongoing," Massey said.

"We started with our Oracle database, and our HP-UX batch processing, and were so pleased with the results that we have continued to progress toward making as much of our infrastructure as possible run on Red Hat Enterprise Linux."

BENEFITS

The migration went extraordinary smoothly, and was accomplished "virtually painlessly," said Massey. And, the cost savings were immediate. There were direct savings, as OL&T was able to keep up with its exponential growth by replacing its proprietary RISC/UNIX boxes with virtualized x86 based systems. And because it had deployed Red Hat Satellite, these virtual machines could be provisioned in a matter of just minutes rather than the hours it previously took to get a new server up and running.

"Red Hat Enterprise Linux running on Intel Xeon processors is truly a rock-solid platform. We absolutely trust Red Hat and Intel with our most mission-critical systems."

**– Brad Massey, IT director,
Odyssey Logistics & Technology**

Then there were indirect savings due to increased IT worker productivity. "Red Hat Enterprise Linux is just so much easier to manage than either UNIX or Windows," said Eric Brown, database administrator. As a result, OL&T can do more with fewer people. "Even with our tremendous growth, we've been able to continue to manage our IT operations with a reasonable staffing level," said Massey.

"And given the kickstart and configuration management capabilities of Red Hat Satellite, our workers can add a lot more value to our organization

About the quality of the support OL&T receives from Red Hat, Massey said it's a moot point. "Red Hat Enterprise Linux just works," he said. "That's the beauty of it." He said he can count on one hand the number of support calls he's had to make - but stressed that those support calls were promptly and professionally dealt with. "The attention and care that Red Hat provides to its customers is truly enterprise-class," he said.



As far as the workloads that Red Hat Enterprise Linux is capable of supporting, Massey said that it's been able to handle everything OL&T has thrown at it. "We've migrated our Oracle databases over to Red Hat Enterprise Linux from Windows and our mission critical batch services for planning and rating from HP-UX over to Red Hat Enterprise Linux," he said. "In fact, we've completely eliminated UNIX from our environment." OL&T is currently also in process of moving its Java workloads from Windows to Red Hat Enterprise Linux.

"Because of its rigorous quality control, Red Hat Enterprise Linux running on Intel Xeon based servers is truly a rock-solid platform. Its reliability continues to impress us daily," said Massey. "And we increasingly think of Red Hat as a partner, not a vendor. We absolutely trust Red Hat Enterprise Linux and Intel with our most mission-critical systems."

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