



AMERICAN FAMILY INSURANCE

JBoss INNOVATION AWARD WINNER 2009: MANAGEMENT EXCELLENCE

Please describe your company.

American Family Mutual Insurance Company, the nation's third-largest mutual property and casualty insurer and 14th-largest property and casualty insurance company group, offers multiple insurance lines. These offerings include automotive, home, life, health, and business insurance.



American Family began with three employees in 1927 and has since grown to become a Fortune 500 company that generated \$6.7 billion in revenue in 2008. American Family has 4,000 agents who serve 19 states.

Please describe the business and/or technical challenges you faced in this project.

An issue of scalability was American Family's greatest technical challenge, as the Java application server environment was growing consistently and there was a need to identify a cost effective, stable and reliable management solution that would complement this growth. American Family's prior management system could not scale to the size needed at an appropriate cost.

American Family deployed JBoss Operations Network (JBoss ON) across 1,200 JBoss application server instances and is using it to monitor and manage those systems.

What was the desired solution?

American Family required a systems management solution that would provide: Real-time monitoring, alerting, historical trending, and the ability to control running systems in its JBoss Enterprise Application Platform environment. Performance of the product was a huge criteria – performance not only to scale, but to be responsive so that the operations team could use it successfully on a daily basis.

What role did Red Hat and/or JBoss products play in the final solution?

About 3 years ago, American Family began migrating its IBM WebSphere environment to JBoss Enterprise Application Platform to run many of the company's business critical applications, including billing and claims, customer information management, an agent-facing sales suite, and web services. As the JBoss environment grew, American Family quickly identified the need for the tools to help monitor and manage the servers. The company evaluated a number of tools from several leading vendors and selected JBoss ON based on cost, scalability, and functionality.

The American Family operations team was asked to monitor, manage, and control a very large computing infrastructure with several different tools. JBoss ON will allow the Computer Operations team to manage the entire JBoss infrastructure with one console.

American Family will also continue to look for additional opportunities to use JBoss ON with their application developers. It is hoped that by using JBoss ON, American Family will be better able to detect and fix problems earlier in the software delivery life-cycle.



What was the overall impact of the project on your business?

American Family expects to see improved reliability in the application server space due to the JBoss ON feature of historical trend analysis of key system metrics and faster time to react when there are problems due to the alerts based on those same metrics.

American Family is hoping to extend this capability into application support areas to detect problems early in the software development lifecycle. Through alerting, monitoring, and the opportunity to proactively address situations before they cause an outage, JBoss ON will improve the reliability and availability of Java application server applications and keep internal customers satisfied.

Ad hoc management scripts and tooling will be replaced with JBoss ON. The result should reduce time and effort needed to manage, monitor and control systems.

What value did you gain from implementing Red Hat solutions?

American Family has been working in a collaborative manner with the JBoss ON engineering, support and product team for close to two years. JBoss provided four people on-site and over the course of two days, they worked out a number of technical challenges that could not have been tested or seen in the lab. This collaboration has resulted in improved scalability and features.

What value did the end customers/users of the solution gain?

By working together, American Family and Red Hat have given back something of value to the open source community.

Did you leverage Red Hat support services, training, or consulting?

American Family worked closely with JBoss ON resources to ensure that the product met functional and non-functional requirements such as scalability and performance.

Do you have advice for other companies facing a similar business challenge?

American Family suggests detailing the desired solution's requirements and identify a provider who not only can offer the specific product, but also the support and willingness to collaborate and devote resources to making the relationship successful.

The Innovation Awards are designed to recognize innovation and outstanding use of open source solutions. Why should your project be considered?

The American Family and JBoss collaborative work on JBoss ON blazed a trail for the future features and scalability of the monitoring and management product and will provide benefits to other customers and developers to capitalize on.

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