

Emphony Technologies achieves 100 per cent uptime with Ubuntu

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Summary

New business Emphony Technologies needed to implement a cost-effective, reliable and available IT infrastructure. It wanted to introduce a server environment on which its project management applications and common workloads could both run. The company chose to implement Ubuntu Server Edition. As a result, the organisation has an easy-to-maintain, cost-effective, reliable infrastructure on which it can depend. Neither Emphony, nor its customers, have experienced any downtime since the implementation took place over a year ago. As it moves into full production, Emphony is now looking to adopt Canonical Support with Landscape systems management software to help it grow as a business.

Business challenge

Launching a new business can be a complicated process. Organising accounts, building up a client base and finding the right employees with limited resources are just some of the challenges that need to be overcome. But once an effective IT infrastructure is in place, companies can start to establish efficient day-to-day processes while providing a valuable service that will keep customers coming back for more.

Established in 2008, Emphony Technologies creates project management software for the engineering, construction, petrochemical and pharmaceutical industries. When the company set out to choose the right IT infrastructure, it started to look for a cost-effective, reliable and available solution.

Andy Newton, Director, Emphony Technologies, says: “We needed a server infrastructure that could run our common workloads, such as file and print and email. It also needed to support our customer project management applications 24x7. We knew that we wanted to go with an Open Source solution because proprietary licences would be too expensive.”

Emphony decided to trial a range of server technologies including Fedora, CentOS, Debian and Ubuntu. Newton says: “We found that Ubuntu was ahead of the pack. It seemed to be a more up-to-date distribution than the alternatives. In addition, we found that the package management features in Ubuntu were excellent. Installation was quick and there were no dependency issues.”

The Ubuntu Server solution

Emphony’s IT infrastructure is now based on Ubuntu Server Edition servers. Six of these servers reside at customer sites running Emphony project management applications, while the remaining four sit in the company’s data centre. One of these is a temporary server running customer applications and the rest run backups and common workloads and host the Emphony website.

The company found that the Ubuntu server infrastructure, which is based on Dell PowerEdge 1950 servers, was quick and easy to deploy. Newton says: “We got our hardware on a Monday and had everything set up by the Friday. That’s including setting up our back-up and replication environments.”

The Ubuntu solution has helped Emphony to manage its systems with ease. Newton says: “We’re using Ubuntu tools for our day-to-day systems management. These tools





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help us to manage our onsite servers and customer site-based servers remotely. As our infrastructure grows, we're already looking at systems management software Landscape and Canonical Support to help us further enhance our IT management processes.”

Emphony staff also use Ubuntu on their desktops. Newton says: “Our staff use Ubuntu for development on the desktop too. Because our application is built on Apache, PHP and MySQL, we can run the same version on our desktops as we do on our servers.”

Results

Ubuntu server infrastructure delivers 100 per cent uptime

Emphony must ensure that its customers have access to their project management applications around-the-clock. Newton says: “If one of our customer application servers went down, in many cases, our customers would start losing money straight away. It would be close to catastrophic.

“We've set up our stall as a company that provides reliable and available technology. Any technology failure would call that claim into question. Thankfully, we've had no downtime issues at all with Ubuntu. The failover systems that we have in place haven't been called on to take the strain once.”

Landscape and Canonical Support simplifies management

Now that its customer base has grown, Emphony is planning to implement a new server infrastructure to support its Far East customers. Newton says: “We aim to introduce Ubuntu-based servers at customer sites in the Far East as soon as possible. That's why we've started trying out systems management software Landscape.”

Landscape helps IT administrators to manage machines across multiple environments through a single web-based interface. It offers secure updates and package provisioning across stand-alone or virtual machines. It also provides a host of additional monitoring, user control, process management, inventory control and support enhancement tools that can help companies increase their productivity immediately.

Newton says: “We'll almost certainly be using Landscape in the near future. Our experience with it has been first-class. It will really help us to gain a clear view of all our server activity, home and abroad. We're thinking of adopting Landscape in conjunction with Canonical support. We'll be able to automatically relay our system information to Canonical Support, ensuring that the configurations and system logs are received by the Ubuntu experts. It will give us real peace of mind that our offsite machines are being fully supported. Both Landscape and Canonical support offer us a great way to grow our business and better manage our infrastructure.”

Frequent release cycle provides ease of integration

Emphony was particularly impressed with the frequent release cycle of Ubuntu Server Edition. Newton says: “The fact that Ubuntu is released every six months means that we can integrate it with the latest technologies. As a result, we can continue to offer our clients the most up-to-date solutions.

“We also have peace of mind thanks to the daily security updates we receive. From my experiences with Microsoft, I've only ever received updates on a weekly, sometimes monthly basis. With Ubuntu, we have greater confidence that our systems are protected.”

Cost-effective solution saves over £6,000 in one month

The choice of Ubuntu over proprietary software such as Microsoft saved Emphony thousands of pounds in licensing costs. Newton says: “When we were evaluating possible server solutions, we asked Microsoft for some quotations on Microsoft Server 2003 for our servers and Microsoft Windows Vista for our desktops. The licensing costs ruled Microsoft out for us. Implementing Ubuntu on the servers and desktops in our business saved us at least £6,630 in our first month of operations alone.”

