



CASE STUDY

ASP4ALL ACHIEVES CRITICAL CERTIFICATION WITH RED HAT

ASP4all, founded in 1999 and based in Huizen, the Netherlands, is a specialist in building and hosting online applications and websites. The company offers full application service provisioning, application hosting, and web hosting. ASP4all has been awarded the ISO 17799 certification (also known as the International Code for Information Security and Business Continuity) for the high quality of its technology and security implementations. ASP4all is also externally audited every six months by KPMG.

The company has built two highly resilient A-class data centers in Amsterdam, providing services to mid-size and large companies, government institutions, local councils and educational institutions across the Netherlands.

The Netherlands' two most important government websites, Overheid.nl and Regering.nl, are hosted and managed by ASP4all, providing legal and social information to the Netherlands' 16 million citizens.

GROWTH CREATES STRICT TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Amid growing demand from its customers for large scale website and online application hosting, ASP4all recognized the long term value in building a highly resilient infrastructure capable of providing secure and scalable services. The chosen infrastructure would need to provide high levels of uptime whilst requiring only a small number of system administrators. Wanting to standardize on a single platform, the company looked to increase the cost-effectiveness of its solutions without substantially increasing its operating costs.

In addition, the platform had to fulfill certain specific criteria, including support for a wide range of common databases like MS-SQL Server®, Oracle®, Progress®, Sybase®, MySQL®, and PostgreSQL®, as used by customers Vodafone®, Kennisnet, Regering.nl and Overheid.nl.

RED HAT PROVIDES FULL-SERVICE SOLUTION

ASP4all's heterogeneous network is standardized on Red Hat Enterprise Linux and Microsoft® Windows®.

FAST FACTS

Industry: Technology (ASP, Hosting and E-Business)

Geography: The Netherlands

Challenge: To build a standardized, high-availability application-, web- and database-server environment that would ensure security, interoperability with multiple database systems, and cost efficiency for a growing customer base.

Solution:

- **Platform:** Red Hat Enterprise Linux ES Premium Edition, Red Hat Network Satellite Server, Red Hat Technical Account Manager (TAM)
- **Hardware:** HP ProLiant DL380, HP BL20, Dell PowerEdge 1850, Dell PowerEdge 2850s servers

Benefits:

- Increased performance and availability of applications on a standardized platform.
- Simplified maintenance and support.
- ISO 17799 compliance.

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The company chose Red Hat Enterprise Linux ES Premium Edition at its Linux standard, which ensures that they are able to meet stringent requirements for security, interoperability and cost-efficiency. The use of Red Hat Enterprise Linux now also enables the company to provide “five nines” reliability to its customers.

Red Hat Enterprise Linux

Today, ASP4all clients have their systems hosted on 300 Red Hat Enterprise Linux servers. ASP4all uses a combination of HP ProLiant® DL 380 / BL20P servers and Dell PowerEdge® 1850 and 2850s servers. This solution has been optimized for large transactional systems and allows ASP4all to deliver 100% on its service level agreements.

Red Hat Network Satellite Server

Having first completed pilot implementations, the company has now built its entire Linux infrastructure utilizing the Red Hat Network (RHN) Satellite server. This guarantees a secure and reliable environment for ASP4all’s customers, while also providing the ASP4all team with in-depth technical support from Red Hat Network advisers.

Red Hat Training

Several of ASP4all’s support staff and engineers specialize in Red Hat solutions and have become Red Hat Certified Engineers (RHCE). These specialists have built a wealth of experience hosting and supporting Red Hat Enterprise Linux systems within the company. In order to maintain this expertise, ASP4all invests in continuous training and improvement for its staff, while also making use of the Red Hat Technical Account Management (TAM) service for specific situations and changes.

RED HAT SOLUTIONS ARE STABLE, SECURE, AND COST-EFFECTIVE

“In the early days of ASP4all, we installed our applications on Solaris and Windows-based platforms, but we soon outgrew this environment which proved to be rather costly. As a result, we started implementing Linux solutions as well,” says Marcel Jansen, CTO at ASP4all. “When we came across Red Hat, the advantages were very clear – Red Hat Enterprise Linux is stable, secure, cost-effective and highly compatible with our database offerings. Putting it simply, some applications just run faster and are more reliable on a Linux platform.”

A significant benefit for ASP4all is the dramatic reduction in installation and optimization time for online applications. “With Red Hat Enterprise Linux, we are able to have applications up and running in next to no time – a refreshing change from other operating system platforms. After installation, applications run consistently and quickly, and updating of the OS is much smoother too,” says Jansen.

“The RHN Satellite Server architecture allows us to stay in complete control of our network, while ensuring that security is always at the highest possible level... Having RHN backing us up means that we can guarantee the very best support possible to our customers.”

ASP4all has a small but growing number of customers running Oracle databases on Red Hat Enterprise Linux. As a result, ASP4all has been able to provide exceptionally robust and reliable performance in compute-intensive transactional systems, ensuring that customers such as Vodafone, which hosts its online shop with ASP4all, derive maximum benefit from their investments.

Deploying Red Hat Network Satellite Server has also been an important step for ASP4all. "We are very proud to have one of the first RHN Satellite Server deployments in the Netherlands," says Jansen. "The Satellite architecture allows us to stay in complete control of our network, whilst ensuring that security is always at the highest possible level. In addition, maintenance and support are a key part of our service offering, and having the Red Hat Network backing us up means that we can guarantee the very best support possible to our customers," says Jansen.

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CROWNING ACHIEVEMENT IS ISO 17799 CERTIFICATION

Perhaps the most important benefit of ASP4all's Red Hat Enterprise Linux implementation is the role it played in helping the company gain its ISO 17799 certification. Jansen says: "The requirements of ISO 17799 are some of the most stringent in the IT industry, and set strict rules for security policies, system development, maintenance and disaster recovery. The use of the Satellite Server and Red Hat Network contributed to fulfilling the requirements for certification, and as a result, to the growth of our business. Security and business continuity are of critical importance to our customers."

