



CITY OF BLOOMINGTON INCREASES PERFORMANCE WHILE TRIMMING BUDGET

| FAST FACTS | |
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| Industry: | State & Local Government |
| Challenge: | Increase performance despite sharply decreased budget |
| Solution: | Platform: Red Hat Enterprise Linux; Software: Oracle11i, GenaWare's GenaMap; Integration provider: Mascon IT |
| Benefits: | Dramatically improved performance. Lowered maintenance and support costs. Delivered project within budget. |

When budgets are slim, many municipalities are forced to compensate with service cutbacks. But the City of Bloomington, Indiana (pop. 70,000) continually looks for a better way. The City's Information Technology Services Department (ITSD), saw a recent budget shortfall as a big opportunity to achieve two important goals. By migrating to Red Hat Enterprise Linux, the City increased performance and flexibility in their most mission-critical systems while chalking up significant savings over their previous Unix-based environment.

OPPORTUNITY

Gregory Volan, Chief Information Officer for the City of Bloomington, holds responsibility for delivering a robust IT environment to meet the growing and diverse computing needs of the City's departments. In the past, the City's Oracle applications and many other mission-critical systems ran on a Unix platform. Over time, the costs and performance issues associated with maintaining and supporting their Unix environment became inefficient. So, in their constant quest to improve their service, the City began to investigate the comparative benefits of Red Hat Enterprise Linux. Volan explains, "Our Unix systems were slow because our servers were outdated and we could not afford to replace them with new equipment. But it still cost a tremendous amount to

maintain and support the older Unix servers. We were sacrificing performance to keep costs down. Linux gave us the opportunity to improve performance significantly without having to increase our budget."

For several years, Bloomington's ITSD had been building knowledge and experience with Red Hat Linux. The cost efficiency of open standards-based systems is a tremendous draw for budget-minded City managers, and as Red Hat Linux proved its reliability, confidence in a decision to migrate the entire City to the mission-critical Red Hat Enterprise Linux platform grew. According to Volan, "There was a strong desire for the City to use open source systems, and that was one of the attractions of Linux. The Unix platform was not capable of handling the new environment and was costing the City extensively. We were not sure whether we could afford to incur more costs with the current environment, as growth and scalability became critical issues for us. On the other hand, cost is not the only factor when it comes to our mission-critical applications. The reliability of the Linux platform and Red Hat's position as an industry leader were both important factors in making the decision to move our mission-critical applications over to Linux."



SOLUTION

Bloomington's Geographic Information System (GIS) application, GenaWare's GenaMap, is among the most important of the City's applications. Certified on Red Hat Enterprise Linux, GenaMap was a smooth migration task for the ITSD staff, who were already well versed in Linux. Emphasizing the importance of a staff trained on Red Hat products, Volan states, "What mitigated much of the migration risk was that we had a knowledgeable staff. We already had several years of experience supporting Red Hat Linux systems, and we did not have to factor in retraining expenses, which otherwise could have reduced or eliminated the cost benefits of switching to Red Hat Enterprise Linux. "And the savings made it possible to make other needed improvements. "When we switched the GenaMap solution from the old environment to the new IBM servers running Linux, the performance increased by several orders of magnitude. It was dramatic."

One of the most critical IT applications for the City of Bloomington is its Oracle Financials system. Turning to Mascon IT, a Certified Solution Partner for Oracle E-business Solutions, the City was able to leverage the savings realized in their previous migration to launch their next effort. "We were upgrading to the latest version of Oracle and realized we had performance issues with the equipment," explains Volan. Mascon's strong expertise at delivering Oracle upgrade solutions coupled with Red Hat's reliability and efficiency with running Oracle-based systems gave ITSD the confidence needed to make two major changes to their environment. They were able to upgrade their Oracle Financials application and migrate it to Red Hat Enterprise Linux at the same time. Again, the improvement in performance was remarkable. In one case, an essential report that had previously required more than two hours to run was completing in approximately two minutes in the new environment.

OPPORTUNITY

Recent changes in many states, including Indiana, have decreased the amount of state tax revenue that passes directly to municipalities. For the City of Bloomington, the immediate impact of this change is about \$500,000 per year. As the City responds to this revenue shortfall, there continues to be increasing pressure for departments to hold or cut expenses when possible.

Migrating to Red Hat Enterprise Linux has allowed the ITSD to stay within their declining budget while still answering the City's rising needs for computing power, flexibility, and efficiency. The City of Bloomington's IT environment has been significantly improved, and Greg Volan could not be more pleased. "We were certain that Red Hat Enterprise Linux—with its performance, reliability, and support options—was the optimal platform for these critical initiatives. We no longer have to pay substantial support and licensing costs for the Unix OS and hardware. We are achieving great performance from our Linux machines. And we were able to meet budget requirements without reducing any of the services we were providing to other departments."

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