



# COIG SELECTS RED HAT ENTERPRISE LINUX

## IT management simplified at Polish coal mines

### FAST FACTS

Industry:	Technology, specializing in mining companies
Geography:	Poland
Challenge:	Outdated and disjointed IT infrastructure created performance and maintenance issues for Polish coal mines. COIG needed to renew the aging IT infrastructure based on SCO Unix across 50 remote locations, while increasing functionality and reducing maintenance downtime.
Solution:	Centralized server, hosted at single location and containing shared database.
Software:	Red Hat® Enterprise Linux®
Applications:	Oracle database, SZYK and SAP ERP applications, Apache Web server and Zope application server
Hardware:	IBM xSeries and Blade servers
Benefits:	The move to Red Hat Enterprise Linux delivered reduced maintenance and purchase costs, greater functionality, simpler system management, and increased and faster performance.



### BACKGROUND

COIG is a major outsourcing company and independent software vendor (ISV) in Poland, responsible for managing several major IT contracts. Among these contracts, COIG maintains the IT infrastructure for Poland's entire coal mine network. The company is based in Katowice and operates with 500 employees as a limited company and with majority ownership by the government. In addition to providing IT consultancy and administration services, COIG is also an ISV developing its own Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software.

There are approximately 50 coal mines in Poland administered by COIG. This includes Kompania Weglowa, Poland's largest mining holding and the biggest mine in Eastern Europe.

### OPPORTUNITY

For the last ten years, each coal mine has had its own separate network with individual IBM servers running SCO Unix, IBM AIX and Informix databases. In the past couple of years, the mines have experienced serious stability issues, making the application servers extremely unreliable.

The infrastructure also required that all IT administration, including system updates, maintenance, and support, had to be done locally at the coal mines. With servers in remote locations, any maintenance problems required an engineer to travel between the sites, resulting in long downtime and costly repairs.

The mines were dependent on an outdated and disjointed IT infrastructure that created performance and maintenance issues. The situation degenerated to the point that the coal mines had no choice but to increase functionality and reliability by upgrading their systems. They needed to renew the ageing IT infrastructure based on SCO Unix across 50 remote locations, while increasing functionality and reducing maintenance downtime and costs.



## SOLUTION

VDEL Ltd., based in Vienna, Austria, is a Red Hat dedicated channel partner serving customers throughout Central Europe, Eastern Europe, and Russia (CER). Since April 2005, the master distributor has supported Red Hat Enterprise Linux solutions with services and training. VDEL has been working with COIG for a number of years, and was in a position to advise them about the lower cost, scalability, and reliability benefits of deploying an open source solution instead of Unix. VDEL's technology understanding and experience, coupled with a strong understanding of the local market, enabled the outsourcing company to take full advantage of the opportunities created by the implementation of a new infrastructure based on open source technology.

After looking at all the major Linux distributions and an holding an intensive evaluation session, COIG opted for Red Hat Enterprise Linux.

"Having evaluated other Linux distributions, it was clear that Red Hat provides extensive and probably the best support to its customers. Red Hat Enterprise Linux has a proven track record with stability. Red Hat also has an established ecosystem in terms of partner support, which is very important for us," said Piotr Kral, IT Manager, COIG.

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USA/Canada

1-888-REDHAT1

1-866-273-3428 X44555

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To simplify the maintenance of differing IT systems, COIG chose to host a central data center for the entire coal mine network at its head office in Katowice. The central server system runs Red Hat Enterprise Linux on a combination of 20 IBM xSeries and BladeCenter servers, and will soon be extended to include an additional five IBM Open Power blades. The deployment is managed by the Red Hat Network, currently running as a hosted service with the Management Module enabled.

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## BENEFITS

The Red Hat Network Management Module supports the enterprise administration of the whole Linux infrastructure at COIG. It features highly scalable system grouping facilities for management tasks, and role-based administration for policies and permissions. It also features scheduling of actions, such as software and security updates for specific time windows, for easy manageability as the organization grows. The Management Module provides the functionality needed to help COIG lower costs and increase productivity immediately.

The new servers with Red Hat Enterprise Linux are able to host a range of business applications, including SAP, Oracle, Apache web server, Zope application server, and SZYK. SZYK is an ERP application developed by COIG and used by the coal mines for a number of operations, including stock control, accounting, sales support and purchasing.

The users at the coal mines connect to the centralized server to access these shared applications and databases. Having a centralized server enables COIG to administer its Red Hat deployment easily and reduces time spent on system maintenance. Tracking stock in the databases created an unexpected cost saving. The new system more accurately tracks and accounts for coal, significantly reducing theft and loss.

COIG is looking to further expand its Red Hat deployment by upgrading its Red Hat Network subscription to the Satellite Server, which will provide even greater functionality and customisation. COIG also plans on expanding its SAP deployment by installing the SAP portal.

"We had major stability issues before, and the application server was not functioning properly at all," said Kral. "We have experienced significant improvement in the performance at our new centralised data center. The migration to Red Hat Enterprise Linux went very smoothly, and when we realized that the Linux systems reached an excellent response time, we just had to match that with low-cost hardware."