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DOUBLECLICK SEAMLESSLY MIGRATES TO FLEXIBLE RED HAT SOLUTIONS IN ONE HOUR WITH ACRONIS

FAST FACTS

Industry:	Digital advertising
Challenge:	DoubleClick faced the challenge of developing an infrastructure that is reliable, cost-effective, and most importantly, flexible, in providing choice with hardware vendors in order to avoid vendor lock-in.
Software:	Red Hat Enterprise Linux AS, Red Hat Network, Acronis True Image Server for Linux, Solaris, Windows, Red Hat Global Learning Services - Red Hat Certified Engineer training
Hardware:	AMD, Intel, HP
Benefits:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Red Hat Enterprise Linux provided DoubleClick with flexibility and power of choice in selecting a hardware vendor to avoid lock-in.• Using Red Hat solutions helped DoubleClick save over \$500,000 in hardware costs. DoubleClick now has the ability to handle more work load with fewer CPUs, as it ported 112 CPUs to 64 CPUs.• With the help of Acronis solutions, DoubleClick enjoyed an easy and quick migration from RHEL 3 to RHEL 4 in one hour.

BACKGROUND

DoubleClick is a provider of digital marketing technology and services. Many of the world's top marketers, publishers and agencies utilize DoubleClick's expertise in ad serving, rich media, video, search and affiliate marketing to help them make the most of the digital medium. From its position at the nerve center of digital marketing, DoubleClick provides superior insights and insider knowledge to its customers. Headquartered in New York, and with 17 offices and development hubs and 15 data centers worldwide, the company employs more than 1200 people and delivers billions of digital communications every day. Learn more at www.doubleclick.com. Recently, DoubleClick partnered with Acronis, a leading storage management solution provider, to aid in its migration to Red Hat solutions.

DoubleClick deployed Acronis' Linux data migration solution on Red Hat Enterprise Linux in one of the first examples of imaging solutions based on Linux. Together, Red Hat and Acronis made DoubleClick's migration from Red Hat Enterprise Linux 3 to Red Hat Enterprise Linux 4 seamless.

CHALLENGE

DoubleClick offers a suite of products to meet customer's digital marketing needs. Serving customers ranging from agencies, advertisers and marketers to web publishers, networks and media websites, DoubleClick is responsible for delivering advertisements and providing management technology that measures the effectiveness of online campaigns.

With the need to consistently serve ads and provide data access, downtime is not an option for DoubleClick. "Uptime is based on millisecond delay and if a server is lost, it must be replaced within an hour," said Derrick Colon, director of Assistance Infrastructure at DoubleClick. "If we don't deliver the reports we promise on time each day, our customers will be rightfully upset. That's why our solutions must be up and available at all times."

SOLUTION

In the face of these high client expectations, DoubleClick needed an infrastructure that would be reliable, cost-effective and - most importantly - flexible. The company was interested in high-level support for its solutions and the ability to choose and easily switch hardware vendors in order to avoid lock-in. With Red Hat, DoubleClick found the flexibility it was looking for, and an opportunity for high-quality support.

Until 2004, DoubleClick ran an ETL-based application on a Sun Solaris platform. Realizing that the platform offered limited vendor choices, the company decided to investigate alternative platforms that would offer greater flexibility in vendors. As DoubleClick explored potential operating systems for their infrastructure, support also became a large factor in the selection process. DoubleClick did not want to be forced into large modifications, but wanted a functional system, an easy migration and a comfortable support service in which they could have confidence.

DoubleClick narrowed its options to Red Hat Enterprise Linux and SUSE Linux Enterprise, both open source solutions. Ultimately, DoubleClick chose the industry leader, Red Hat. "We decided Red Hat was the best way to go because of its strong position in the United States and the fact that it is well supported by HP, IBM and other major players," said Colon. "We were also very impressed by their flexibility and the big company support that came with the Red Hat solution."

By choosing Red Hat, DoubleClick was able to work with the hardware vendor and support provider of their choice, Hewlett Packard, which offered DoubleClick the opportunity for cost-savings through hardware.

After choosing Red Hat, DoubleClick ported an equivalent of 112 CPUs on Sun servers running Solaris to 64 Intel and AMD CPUs on Red Hat Enterprise Linux, cutting the hardware cost more than half. The current environment is a mix of Red Hat, Solaris and Windows, with Red Hat playing a significant role. Originally running Red Hat Enterprise Linux 2.1, DoubleClick upgraded to Red Hat Enterprise 3 and most recently Red Hat Enterprise Linux 4 with the help of Acronis True Image Server for Linux.

Acronis, the only company with a cloning method certified to work on Linux, uses its solutions to create an exact copy of a company's hard disk that allows for an instant restoration of the entire machine including operating system, applications and all data in the event of a fatal system crash, virus attack or other problem. DoubleClick chose Acronis for its cloning ability to aid its migration from Red Hat Enterprise Linux 3 to 4. By cloning the image of one upgrade and using it for other server migrations, the process is considerably expedited. As a result, DoubleClick was able to migrate its servers from Red Hat Enterprise Linux 3 to Red Hat Enterprise Linux 4 seamlessly.

While preparing for the upgrade to Red Hat Enterprise Linux 4, DoubleClick wanted to ensure that should any problems arise, it could revert back to its earlier version of the operating system within two hours. Although the operating system upgrades were executed without a hitch, DoubleClick was protected against unforeseen circumstances. Had there been any unanticipated problems, DoubleClick could have reverted to the old operating system within its required timeframe. This added protection made it easier for the company to decide to upgrade.



Also aiding in the ease of migration were the Red Hat certifications that the DoubleClick team obtained during the original Red Hat implementation. The Red Hat Certified Engineer certification proves an individual's ability to configure networking services and security on servers running a Red Hat operating system. "When we first migrated to Red Hat Enterprise Linux 2.1, we taught ourselves from the ground up," said Colon. "The existing team went through Red Hat certification training, and today we have about five Red Hat Certified Engineers on our staff who facilitated our migration."

BENEFITS

Red Hat Enterprise Linux has been an integral part of DoubleClick's infrastructure for three years. From the start, Red Hat has provided DoubleClick with a reliable and dynamic solution that keeps its technology performing in line with demand. With Red Hat and its partners, the company exercised the power of choice, achieved over half a million dollars worth of cost-savings through commodity hardware, enjoyed reliable support and experienced a scalable solution.

"The flexibility in deciding which hardware vendor I want to work with gives me more choices and more control," said Colon.

Additionally, DoubleClick has benefited from the scalability that Red Hat Enterprise Linux presents. Red Hat Enterprise Linux has provided DoubleClick with a scalable solution. "Essentially, this solution has enabled me to do more with less," said Colon. "Thanks to the tools at our disposal, we are more than able to handle the needs of the company, while enhancing efficiency and productivity."

"The combination of Red Hat, HP and Acronis is a strong one," said Colon. "All three organizations bring valuable expertise and resources to the table - HP from a hardware perspective, Acronis in terms of the ease of getting systems up quickly with the option to roll out or back, and Red Hat for maintaining an environment without having to buy thousands of servers with reporting structure."

Looking forward, DoubleClick plans to upgrade to Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5 and is anticipating working with the virtualization features that were incorporated in the latest release. Virtualization, via Xen, enables customers using Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5 to run multiple operating system instances on a single physical system and isolate the application stack from the hardware.

