



EBS Building Society

EBS has simplified its infrastructure, cut operating system licensing fees and reduced its total costs of operation by consolidating multiple applications to SUSE® Linux Enterprise Server on its IBM® System z* mainframe.

Overview

EBS Building Society, based in Dublin, Ireland, offers a broad range of banking, mortgage, saving and investment products. EBS employs approximately 600 people in its head office and branch network serving over 400,000 members. It is the fifth largest retail credit institution in Ireland with total assets under management of over €16 billion.

Challenge

EBS is a highly successful mutual society, attracting new savers, investors and borrowers. Each time the organisation creates new financial products, it typically introduces new applications to support them, including Internet banking services and other online tools. As a result of this continual innovation, EBS found that both the number of physical servers and the diversity of operating systems were increasing, with a consequent rise in complexity and cost of operation.

Core banking systems run on the IBM System z mainframe platform, while most newer applications run on UNIX* servers—and the branch offices used both Linux- and Windows-based front-end applications.

EBS wanted to rationalise its physical infrastructure, reducing the number of standalone servers to cut its management and maintenance costs, and reducing the total number of processors to cut software licensing fees.

“We had embraced Linux for a number of our applications at the branch infrastructure level, and were looking to capitalise on the same skill-sets at head office,” said Paul Nicholls, Enterprise Systems Manager at EBS. “By consolidating to Linux virtual servers running on our existing mainframe, we expected to accelerate the deployment of new services while reducing costs and halting the proliferation of physical servers in our data centre.”

Solution

EBS selected SUSE Linux Enterprise Server as its new strategic platform, running on the IBM z/VM operating system on an IBM System z mainframe. EBS can quickly and easily create a new Linux* virtual server for each new application, enabling the organisation to deliver new services cost-effectively in a standardised environment.

“A key factor in our decision was IBM’s support for SUSE Linux Enterprise Server in the mainframe environment,” said Nicholls. “During the design and implementation of the solution, we received expert advice and support from the IBM laboratories in Boeblingen, Germany.”

EBS uses IBM WebSphere* middleware to manage communications between customer-facing Web applications running under Linux and the back-end CICS transactional systems. In addition to reducing

EBS at a glance:

Leading Dublin-based financial services organisation

■ Industry:

Financial Services

■ Location:

Republic of Ireland

■ Solutions:

SUSE Linux Enterprise Server

■ Results:

- *Reduced complexity of infrastructure, cutting operational costs*
- *Improved service levels to the business by boosting reliability of IT systems*
- *Accelerated the delivery of new applications and services*

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*Enterprise Systems Manager
EBS*

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complexity, the high-speed virtual ethernet facility of the mainframe enables communications at far greater speeds that could be achieved between separate physical systems.

“By running new applications on SUSE Linux Enterprise Server on the mainframe, we have avoided buying several additional mid-range servers and implementing all the associated physical networking,” said Nicholls. “With the CICS transactions, WebSphere and SUSE Linux Enterprise Server systems all running on the same physical server, we have a single point of control which helps to reduce the total IT management workload.”

SUSE Linux Enterprise Server on the mainframe provides high performance and availability for crucial customer-facing systems at EBS. It also gives the organisation a standardised, open environment for application development on the mainframe, enabling EBS to take advantage of the platform’s phenomenal reliability, availability and scalability without being locked into proprietary software. Any applications developed for SUSE Linux Enterprise Server on the mainframe can easily be moved to alternative hardware platforms in the future, allowing EBS to keep its options open.

Results

By selecting SUSE Linux Enterprise Server on the mainframe as its strategic platform for the delivery of new applications, EBS has reduced its expenditure on new hardware. The organisation has avoided buying several

mid-range UNIX servers, representing a significant saving both in acquisition costs and in ongoing management and licensing costs.

“With Linux virtual servers on the IBM System z platform, EBS has effectively removed the need to invest in a number of standalone servers,” said Nicholls. “We have already made substantial savings in hardware and software costs, and the benefits will accrue as we add new virtual servers instead of physical systems.”

Running SUSE Linux Enterprise Server on the mainframe helps EBS to achieve demanding service targets, not least because the simplification of the physical infrastructure has reduced the IT management workload, freeing skilled technicians to focus on service delivery.

By implementing new systems as Linux virtual servers on the mainframe, EBS has both strengthened and simplified its backup and disaster recovery capabilities. All virtual servers running on the System z platform are backed up and restored from a single point of control, using enterprise-class storage.

“SUSE Linux Enterprise Server gives EBS a highly reliable application environment that is independent of the underlying physical hardware, giving us an enormous amount of flexibility,” said Nicholls. “By moving to virtual servers on the mainframe, we have significantly reduced costs and complexity, while accelerating the introduction of new services.”



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