



Overview

The need

IT-Informatik wanted to stay ahead of competitors by offering sophisticated SAP hosting and cloud services—but its complex landscape made it difficult to set up client environments cost-effectively.

The solution

To simplify and optimize its SAP application hosting and cloud services, the company is using SUSE Linux Enterprise Server on an IBM® Power® System S822L server with IBM PowerKVM virtualization.

The benefit

Homogeneous, cross-platform administration cuts costs and helps deploy SAP applications 75 percent faster, enabling competitive pricing and doubling per-core performance compared to x86 servers.

IT-Informatik

Staying ahead of the competition by cutting costs and deploying SAP systems faster

In search of the right hosting platform

IT-Informatik provides SAP solution hosting and cloud services for medium-sized companies. For example, the company hosts SAP ERP applications for financials, controlling, materials management, production planning, as well as SAP ERP Human Capital Management and SAP Business Warehouse.

To secure its leading market position, IT-Informatik aimed to boost retention and win new business by creating highly competitive and flexible offerings. Achieving the goal meant streamlining its hosting environment to improve agility, operational efficiency and cut costs.

Jürgen Mang, Head of Network and Hosting at IT-Informatik, explains: “Our clients require ever more specialized applications for use on mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets, and the ability to deliver those next-generation applications such as SAP Fiori apps on a flexible, scalable platform is now a key requirement. Our aim is to provide the hosting and cloud solutions that deliver on our clients’ expectations for a fast, cost-effective service.”

Jochen Wöhrle, Head of Business Unit Technology at IT-Informatik, continues: “To offer our clients highly reliable business applications and respond quickly to changing requirements, we wanted to accelerate our operations processes without increasing staff levels.”

“Setting up a new system used to take us four hours,” recalls Jürgen Mang, Head of Network and Hosting at IT-Informatik. “Because IBM PowerKVM is so easy to handle for Linux administrators, we can now set up a new system in an hour.”



Solution components

Hardware

- IBM® Power System S822L
- IBM Storwize® V7000
- IBM System Storage® TS7620
Protec TIER® Deduplication Appliance
- IBM System Storage 3310 Tape Library
- IBM System Storage 3200 Tape Library

Software

- IBM PowerKVM
- IBM Tivoli® Storage Manager

Applications

- SAP ERP
 - SAP ERP Human Capital Management
 - SAP Business Warehouse
 - SAP Fiori apps
 - SAP MaxDB
 - SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for IBM Power
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With existing systems at or near capacity, IT-Informatik, looked for ways to expand the scope, performance and capabilities of its hosting and cloud services. The company realized that if it could accelerate the deployment of new SAP application environments, it could on-board new customers more rapidly and respond faster to clients' changing business needs. How could it enable faster implementations and reduce total operating costs?

Gaining flexibility with Linux on IBM POWER8

IT-Informatik runs the majority of its customers' mission-critical solutions on SUSE Linux Enterprise Server 11 for IBM POWER®. The company recognized that consolidating its servers to a single IBM Power Systems™ server running multiple virtual machines would dramatically simplify the IT environment, cut costs and increase system flexibility.

To expand its fully virtualized and automated environment for SAP application hosting, IT-Informatik worked with IBM to deploy an additional IBM Power System S822L server, IBM PowerKVM virtualization and the SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for IBM Power operating system in combination with two IBM Storwize® V7000 storage systems.

IT-Informatik currently runs approximately 30 SAP systems, and is gradually moving additional workloads to the new IBM POWER8® processor-based servers. To ensure business continuity even in the event of failure of a location, the company synchronizes data between the IBM Storwize V7000 systems using IBM Metro Mirror technology across two sites. The IBM Storwize V7000 devices include a mix of solid-state and standard disk drives, offering high-performance data access at an optimized price point for customers.

Jochen Wöhrle explains: "IBM Storwize V7000 was the natural choice for our private cloud environment. Our IBM storage solution and IBM POWER8 processor-based technology provides the performance and flexibility we need to offer high-quality SAP hosting on SUSE Linux Enterprise Server to our customers. In addition, IBM Easy Tier provides excellent storage performance by monitoring usage patterns in real time and automatically moving the most frequently accessed data to low-latency solid state drives."

Jürgen Mang says: "IBM PowerKVM is the ideal solution for us. Because we have experienced SUSE Linux Enterprise Server administrators on our team, working with IBM PowerKVM is a big advantage, as it enables our people to build on their previous experience with virtualization on other platforms without the need to learn completely new tools.

“IBM POWER8 with IBM PowerKVM virtualization and Linux is a cost-efficient foundation for SAP application hosting.”

— Jochen Wöhrle, Head of Business Unit Technology, IT-Informatik

“We see that central configuration management is essential to operate a private cloud efficiently. With IBM PowerKVM we can now manage the entire stack – hypervisor, operating system and applications—centrally and across platforms. IBM PowerKVM helps to enable full visibility of all our systems and offers a single point of control for all deployment and update processes. This standardization allows us to run SAP applications smarter with IBM SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for IBM Power, and reduce the need for manual maintenance and troubleshooting.”

Streamlining management and cutting costs

In comparison to its x86 server landscape, IT-Informatik is now realizing the benefit of running its client environments on IBM Power Systems servers, including higher SAP workload capacity per processor, improved reliability and lower maintenance during the leasing cycle. As a result, the company has increased business agility and substantially reduced its total cost of ownership, enabling more competitive pricing.

Jochen Wöhrle comments: “By upgrading to POWER8 technology and streamlining processes with a higher level of automation, we shortened deployment time of SAP applications by 75 percent. Better still, we have reduced our operating costs substantially, which enables us to improve the competitiveness of our offering and increase our margins at the same time. Running SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for IBM Power on IBM POWER8 is undoubtedly a cost-efficient solution—not least because of its 50 percent faster per-core performance leading to a 75 percent smaller data center footprint compared to x86 servers, and low energy consumption.”

Achim Schütz, Head of SAP Technology at IT-Informatik, concludes: “Thanks to IBM POWER8, our clients benefit from significantly faster and more dynamic SAP applications, and we obtain the flexible, cost-effective cloud services we need to attract new business and grow our client base.”

About IT-Informatik

Headquartered in Ulm, Germany, IT-Informatik offers SAP consulting and hosting services. The company also develops online shops and web-based business to business applications. IT-Informatik employs more than 300 people and reports annual revenues of approximately EUR30 million (USD33.1 million).

To learn more IT-Informatik, visit: www.it-informatik.de

For more information

To learn more about Linux on IBM Power Systems, please contact your IBM representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit the following website: ibm.com/systems/power/software/linux/



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