



AUTOTRADER.CO.UK MIGRATES TO RED HAT SOLUTIONS FOR PERFORMANCE, STABILITY AND RELIABILITY

RED HAT ENTERPRISE LINUX AND JBOSS ENTERPRISE MIDDLEWARE FORM BEDROCK FOR OVER 120 APPLICATIONS AND HIGH TRAFFIC WEB PORTAL

FAST FACTS

Industry	Publishing
Geography	United Kingdom
Business Challenge	To replace inefficient, incumbent systems with a reliable and affordable standardised system
Migration Path	A number of different platforms, including Tomcat, to one standardised platform based on Red Hat Enterprise Linux and JBoss Enterprise Middleware
Hardware	x86 commodity hardware
Software	Red Hat Enterprise Linux, JBoss Enterprise Application Platform including JBoss Hibernate
Benefits	Gained increased knowledge management, expanded stability, and reduced operational costs



BACKGROUND

AutoTrader.co.uk is the UK's No. 1 motoring website, with over 10.3 million monthly unique users, who carry out over 106 million searches on new and used vehicles¹. The brand is building a competitive position across all effective channels including online, mobile and magazine.

AutoTrader.co.uk is owned by Trader Media Group, one of Europe's largest specialist multi-media groups and provider of market leading websites and its associated magazines, including Top Marques, Bike Trader, Truck & Plant Trader, Ad Trader, Motorhome and Caravan Trader, Farmers Trader - all with the largest reach in their sectors, through web visitors and magazine readership.

Trader Media Group² operates in the UK, Ireland, Italy and South Africa. The Group is looking to expand on its winning formula: giving trade customers the opportunity to choose all effective channels to market; building the service and relationship with dealers and manufacturers; and strengthening its portfolio of automotive and specialist classified titles.

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Previously, Trader Media Group was using a variety of different platforms to support various applications across the AutoTrader website, posing a challenge to maintain in terms of cost, efficiency, and, in particular, knowledge management.

Trader Media Group recognised the need to replace these inefficient, incumbent systems with a reliable and affordable alternative. The objective was to standardise its system on one stack, streamlining the maintenance and support required for applications to run on AutoTrader.co.uk.

From a business point of view, there were significant costs associated with running multiple platforms. From an operational perspective, it also wasn't logical for the operations team to undergo a steep learning curve to understand various aspects of the platform in order to address specific issues that arose.

¹ Source: Auto Trader Audit, January 2009

² Trader Media Group is jointly owned by Guardian Media Group and Apax Partners

SOLUTION

Trader Media Group evaluated a number of open source and proprietary solutions that could offer the flexibility and stability that its critical platform required. The team felt that proprietary applications such as WebSphere didn't offer the full value at the cost-effective price that the organization desired. Trader Media Group needed a platform that could run Enterprise JavaBeans (EJB) and Hibernate on an enterprise level and at an affordable price, and it was a natural choice to select JBoss Enterprise Application Platform which integrates a clustered Java EE application server with next generation application frameworks, such as Hibernate.

The migration to standardise the AutoTrader website on JBoss Enterprise Application Platform began in 2006, and because AutoTrader.co.uk was a live site, the process was deliberately gradual. It took two years to complete the migration in total, with around 120 applications being migrated onto JBoss Enterprise Application Platform.

"We are more than happy with JBoss Enterprise Application Platform. Our 60-strong development team are happy with the implementation and the operation teams understand it, laying strong foundations for the future."

**- Peter Hanlon, chief technical architect,
Trader Media Group**

The decision to undertake a gradual, low-risk migration was based on cost, resources, and the need to maintain a competitive edge. The AutoTrader IT team had a strategy of migrating the different applications and elements of the site and schedule of when specific projects were to take place. The alternative, which would be to migrate the site in one go, would have been a resource draining project for the whole team over a four-month period, stifling the continuous innovation and development of the site that helps maintain its position as the leader in the market.

The solution deployed included Red Hat Enterprise Linux as the operating platform and JBoss Enterprise Application Platform for messaging and Web Services, which includes JBoss Hibernate, which is a high performance object/relational persistence and query service. The eco-system also includes core search technology from Endeca. The Trader Media Group team developed a virtualised image, which means that it can quickly deploy new servers when needed. The combination of Red Hat and JBoss solutions allows Trader Media Group to buy, deploy, and redeploy additional servers at very competitive prices.

BENEFITS

Standardising on JBoss has resolved the issues Trader Media Group had with running different platforms. The combined Red Hat Enterprise Linux and JBoss solution has given Trader Media Group a more resilient, high-performing, and stable platform and has ensured that any problems can be resolved quickly by the team.

Trader Media Group's key consideration is supportability. It is crucial that the operations team can understand and support the software. Internally, the fact that Red Hat offers a combination of technology, spanning the operating system and middleware layers, through one complete solution from one reliable vendor offers value for its internal IT staff.

With Red Hat solutions, knowledge management has been simplified considerably, and because the new platform is open source, it has helped to build a strong community where staff can discuss issues and knowledge can be exchanged.

The resulting stability of the business-critical AutoTrader website is also recognised as an important benefit of the Red Hat solution. The availability, stability, and speed of the AutoTrader website is key to the company maintaining its leadership in the market. Users need to know that they can rely on a fast, accessible site that is available 24 hours per day, seven days per week.

Peter Hanlon, chief technical architect, Trader Media Group, said, "In Red Hat and JBoss we have acquired an integrated platform that includes all the core components required, such as messaging and Web Services, resulting in an enterprise-level infrastructure, out of the box. We are more than happy with JBoss Enterprise Application Platform running on Red Hat Enterprise Linux. Our 60-strong development team are happy with the implementation and the operation teams understand it, laying strong foundations for the future."



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