



“Hyperic enables us to monitor all 3,000 sites and get very granular details, and this helps us proactively detect and solve problems before they impact our customers.”

—Kevin Schmidt,
Software Developer, iCIMS

RESULTS

VMware vFabric™ Hyperic® delivers the following business results to iCIMS:

- High Website Availability
- Improved End-User Experience
- Faster Problem Solving - 10-50X improvement
- Increased Productivity
- Reduced Cost of Resources
- Greater Scalability
- Prevention of Production Problems
- Improved Application Quality

iCIMS provides superior customer experience with VMware vFabric Hyperic

iCIMS, based in New Jersey, provides recruitment and HR software, delivered as Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) to 750+ customers around the world, including FedEx, Continental Airlines, Whole Foods, Amazon.com, Hershey, and many more.

iCIMS' goal is to provide the application via a single, easy-to-use technology platform, backed by superior customer service.

Challenge

Initially, iCIMS employed Big Brother, a simple system and network monitoring tool capable of reporting status of red, yellow or green for numerous types of tests, including, but not exclusive to URL monitoring. If a site encountered difficulties, iCIMS had to conduct a time-consuming investigation to determine why a site was experiencing performance issues. “It was a very slow process,” recalls Kevin Schmidt, Software Developer, iCIMS. We didn’t have the tools or resources to figure out quickly why a site was slow or experiencing difficulties.”

iCIMS also attempted to use the Zenoss monitoring tool but found it unable to scale to meet their high growth. “The way Zenoss gathers and stores information is not scalable,” Schmidt confirms. “We couldn’t throw enough hardware at Zenoss to enable it to monitor our entire environment. We would get false positives, and it was extremely difficult to figure out what had caused a performance issue.”

The server-centric architecture of Zenoss meant that the monitoring server had to make an individual JMX call to the Tomcat servers for each statistic. For the company’s detailed statistics, this meant 500,000+ JMX calls in a period of five minutes. “In addition, Zenoss stores each statistic in a separate Round-Robin-Database (RRD) file, which created a huge I/O bottleneck given the large number of statistics being collected,” explains Paul Melici, Directory of Technology, iCIMS. “Zenoss just couldn’t keep up.”

Solution

Today, iCIMS uses VMware vFabric Hyperic monitoring and management software for web applications. iCIMS first evaluated the open source version of Hyperic, and then deployed vFabric Hyperic to monitor 90,000 different services on 3,000 customer websites hosted on 180 Apache Tomcat servers.

Hyperic provides iCIMS with a wide range of performance data including website availability, response times, website hits and Tomcat statistics. This data is used by the production IT team to solve performance issues in real time, and by the R&D team to discover opportunities for performance enhancements on new software releases. iCIMS also plans to leverage the data from Hyperic in executive dashboards to keep the CEO and CTO informed about customer site performance and availability.

“Hyperic is a great tool for root cause analysis ... With Hyperic, we have gained a 10x to 50x improvement on how quickly we can diagnose and solve production issues.”

“Hyperic helps us keep a small production IT team and this helps us lower prices for our customers. We would have to double or triple the size of our team just to handle routine monitoring tasks.”

—Kevin Schmidt,
Software Developer, iCMS

“We looked at many different potential solutions, both open source and commercial, and Hyperic was the only one able to fulfill our requirements in terms of the metrics we needed to collect and the number of servers and websites being monitored,” notes Melici.

Benefits

Hyperic delivers the following business results to iCMS:

High Website Availability

“Hyperic has increased our uptime,” Schmidt says. “An important part of our customer service is availability of the sites we are hosting. Hyperic enables us to monitor all 3,000 sites and get very granular details, and this helps us proactively detect and solve problems before they impact our customers.”

Improved End-User Experience

iCMS also focuses on the responsiveness of customer websites. By alerting the iCMS production IT team to performance slowdowns in real time, across all 3,000 websites, Hyperic enables iCMS to provide the best possible end-user experience.

Faster Problem Solving and Increased Productivity

“Hyperic is a great tool for root cause analysis, and it has helped us investigate and fix production issues fast,” says Schmidt. “With Hyperic, we have gained a 10x to 50x improvement on how quickly we can diagnose and solve production issues.” In addition to faster problem solving, Hyperic gives iCMS a productivity boost because it automates so many previously manual monitoring processes such as spot checking.

Reduced Cost of Resources

iCMS maintains a relatively small production IT team to handle 75 applications servers, 180 Tomcat servers and 3,000 websites. Hyperic automation enables iCMS to keep the team small yet very productive. “Hyperic helps us keep a small production IT team and this helps us lower prices for our customers,” says Schmidt. “We would have to double or triple the size of our team just to handle routine monitoring tasks.”

Greater Scalability

Hyperic has enabled iCMS to scale monitoring services for a growing number of customers – more than 100 have been added this year alone – as well as the growth of current customers that require multiple websites. “Hyperic’s use of agents which gather multiple statistics in a single JMX connection and efficient data storage technology have enabled iCMS to get detailed statistics for our growing number of sites in a timely manner,” Melici says. “Hyperic allows us to dynamically scale our production environment and customer sites so that when a customer has a huge increase in traffic, we can provide them more server and computing power,” Schmidt adds.

Prevention of Production Problems

By alerting the iCMS production IT team to potential issues, Hyperic allows them to solve problems that are easily fixable with simple, practical solutions. For example, by alerting iCMS to heavy traffic on a customer site, iCMS can quickly respond by moving the site to a larger, more powerful server during the surge in traffic. “By preventing production problems, Hyperic saves us, and our customers, an inordinate amount of time and trouble,” Schmidt explains.

Improved Application Quality

The iCIMS R&D team uses Hyperic to analyze performance and uncover opportunities for enhancements in future software releases. For example, Hyperic helped iCIMS realize that redesigning how the web pages are structured delivers a greater performance gain than trying to tweak the server to reduce response time by a couple more milliseconds. “The information we have gathered from Hyperic has enabled us to make performance improvements in our next software release,” Schmidt confirms. “Hyperic was essential in helping us figure out how to improve site performance.”

About VMware

VMware, the global leader in virtualization and cloud infrastructure, delivers customer-proven solutions that reduce IT complexity while significantly lowering costs and enabling more flexible, agile service delivery.

About VMware vFabric

VMware vFabric is the ideal application platform environment to run and manage custom Java applications – in the datacenter, virtualized environments, or the cloud.

Find Out More

For more information or to purchase VMware products, call 1-877-4-VMWARE (outside of North America dial +1-650-427-5000), visit www.vmware.com.

