HALLMARK DATA SYSTEMS
Apache Tomcat and World Class SpringSource Support Keeps Web Application Up and Running For Hallmark Data

Hallmark
DATA SYSTEMS
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SPRINGSOURCE RESULTS

Apache Tomcat and SpringSource deliver the following business results to Hallmark Data:

- Accelerated Development – saving hundreds of hours
- High Application Availability
- Faster Application Response Time
- High Confidence from World-Class Support
- Faster Problem Resolution
- Reduced Administrative Time

TESTIMONIAL

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Hallmark Data Systems

Hallmark Data, based in Skokie, Illinois, performs circulation fulfillment for more than 360 business publications. The company provides everything from front-end clerical labor and call center solutions to preparation of digital and print subscription and marketing databases for reporting, marketing and audience development. The company's web registration and subscription services are a critical component of Hallmark's business. It is essential that the application – which allows readers to subscribe to magazines, as well as renew and update their subscription information, all via the web – is up and running and performing as expected at all times.

Challenge

Before deploying on Apache Tomcat, Hallmark Data's subscription application was running as a CGI application, however, they found that this environment did not meet the company's scalability needs.

In addition, performance issues caused by the CGI application had a major impact on response time of the online subscription application. Hallmark Data needed to find a new application server that could provide the performance and scalability to keep up with the needs of the company's growing customer base. "We needed a highly scalable and high availability environment while maintaining simplicity and low cost of ownership," recalls Joseph To, Programmer/Analyst, Hallmark Data.

Solution

Today, Hallmark Data's magazine subscription application is running on the Apache Web Server and Apache Tomcat Application Server. This move supports Hallmark's migration to Java development. In addition, Hallmark uses Apache ActiveMQ as a JMS message broker to communicate between applications running on the back-end systems and Java running in Linux, and to pass information from the subscription application user interface to the application backend.

Service

Hallmark Data maintains a support contract with SpringSource for the Apache Web Server, Tomcat Application Server, and ActiveMQ.

"Each member of the SpringSource support team is an expert in their own area, and they are very knowledgeable," To says. "Since the SpringSource team knows more about the internal workings of Apache and Tomcat than anybody else, they are able to provide greater insight. When I have a question, they are able to help right away."

Benefits

APACHE TOMCAT AND SPRINGSOURCE SUPPORT DELIVER THE FOLLOWING BUSINESS RESULTS TO HALLMARK DATA:

Accelerated Development

One of the major benefits Hallmark gains from Tomcat is simply the ability to develop in Java, which has dramatically accelerated the company's development. Migrating to Java allows Hallmark to develop applications faster because of extensive IDE support; better support for reuse of code; and the multitude of third-party libraries available. According to To, using Java and an IDE saves Hallmark's development team hundreds of hours.

"Tomcat is more lightweight than other application servers," To states. "This shortens our development time on some applications since we don't have to wait during application deployment and application server startup."

High Application Availability

Hallmark customers depend on the web-based subscription application as a key method of interacting with their customers, so it must be up and running at all times. To ensure high availability, Hallmark data utilizes Tomcat server clusters in production, development and QA environments – a technique that the company was unable to accomplish using other application server solutions due to licensing and support costs.

"Tomcat keeps our application running," To confirms. "By enabling us to cluster the servers, Tomcat allows us to distribute the load and maintain high availability and reliability."

Faster Application Response Time

"Application performance is critical because the magazine subscribers demand a fast reply on the status of their subscription," To explains. "Since Tomcat is lightweight, it runs faster. In addition, Tomcat scales very well, both vertically and horizontally at a far lower cost of ownership than most other application servers available on the market today. This coupled with Tomcat clustering is a winning combination allowing us to utilize resources more efficiently, and pass the cost savings on to our customers."

High Confidence from World-Class Support

"SpringSource tech support allows us to be more confident in our application environment, which is important because our application is used by our clients customers on the Internet," explains To. "Many of the people behind the development of Apache and Tomcat are working at SpringSource. If something happens that must be resolved quickly, it is nice to be backed by the pioneers in the field. By using SpringSource, we have access to the knowledge and ideas from these great people."

Faster Problem Resolution

Hallmark is able to resolve server problems quickly, due to the fast responsiveness of SpringSource support, as well as the knowledge and insight the SpringSource team provides.

Reduced Administration Time

Tomcat reduces administration time for Hallmark Data, when compared with other application servers, because it is easier to configure and administer; the console is more responsive and easier to use; and Tomcat starts and shuts down faster.

Lower Server Costs

"Tomcat saves us money since we can deploy it on any servers we want, and we don't have additional licensing costs," To says, comparing Tomcat with other commercial application server licenses which limit use to only a few machines. "Migrating our front end to Linux/Tomcat just makes good business sense for a support and license cost."

About SpringSource

SpringSource, a division of VMware, Inc., (NYSE: VMW) and the leader in Java application infrastructure and management, provides a complete suite of software products that accelerate the entire build, run, manage enterprise Java application lifecycle. SpringSource employs the open source leaders who created and drive innovation for Spring, the de facto standard programming model for enterprise Java applications. SpringSource also employs the Java and Web thought leaders within the Apache Tomcat, Apache HTTP Server, Hyperic, Groovy and Grails open source communities. Nearly half of the Global 2000, including many of the world's leading retail, fi nancial services, manufacturing, healthcare, technology and public sector clients are SpringSource customers. For more information visit: www.springsource.com.