



PlusServer deploys Landscape Dedicated Server and achieves a rapid return on investment

Hosting provider automates Ubuntu management with Landscape Dedicated Server and frees staff for strategic projects

Company:	PlusServer AG
Industry:	Technology
Country:	Germany
Challenge:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time-consuming systems administration
Solution:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ubuntu Server Edition • Landscape Dedicated Server Edition
Results:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centralised update management enhances security • Optimised system configuration boosts server performance • Management time savings increases focus on innovation • Low-cost deployment delivers rapid returns on investment

Summary

German hosting provider PlusServer AG runs 70 per cent of its internal systems and 15 per cent of customer servers on Ubuntu. To reduce time spent on routine maintenance and improve control over updates, the company rolled out Landscape Dedicated Server from Canonical. With Landscape, PlusServer administrators can manage multiple Ubuntu machines quickly and easily through a centralised, intuitive interface. Using the system, PlusServer has dramatically reduced management workloads, freeing IT staff to develop new value-added services for customers.

Challenge

Hosting companies are in the business of managing infrastructure. They must ensure that all systems are performing well, and that servers are equipped with all the latest software versions and updates. This is the case at leading German hosting provider PlusServer AG, which runs 70 per cent of its internal systems and 15 per cent of customer systems on Ubuntu.

Guido Nickels, Head of System Administration, PlusServer, says: “Ubuntu offers us all the functionality and performance we need with trusted long-term support (LTS). However, management of our Ubuntu systems used to be time consuming, requiring us to write shell scripts manually every month to keep our servers secure and up to date.”

The time spent on manual systems administration was impacting on other PlusServer projects. “As an innovative hosting services provider, we need to spend our energy on optimising our operations and developing new, value-added solutions for customers,” says Nickels. “To redress the balance, we wanted to streamline management of our Ubuntu systems and free up time to focus on more strategic work.”

The Landscape solution

To cut time spent administering Ubuntu machines, PlusServer deployed Landscape Dedicated Server from Canonical. This enterprise-class systems administration solution enables administrators to manage Ubuntu machines, and groups of machines, through an intuitive web-based interface.

“Landscape Dedicated Server helps us keep servers up to date and minimise the risk of security breaches.”

Guido Nickels,
Head of System Administration,
PlusServer

Using Landscape Dedicated Server, PlusServer has automated routine server maintenance tasks, which can be scheduled for low-use times to minimise impact on end users. What’s more, the IT team can deploy security and other updates more effectively, ensuring that internal and customer-facing Ubuntu systems are always optimised, secure and up to date.

In just half a day, the PlusServer IT team deployed Landscape Dedicated Server within its existing hardware environment with minimal support from a Canonical implementation engineer. “We need systems that are easy to deploy and manage in-house to ensure we remain self-reliant in the future,” says Nickels. “Landscape Dedicated Server fits the bill as it’s very simple to deploy and use.”

The PlusServer team tested the new solution and began registering systems gradually. The solution now streamlines management for more than 120 Ubuntu systems across the business. “Because Landscape Dedicated Server is based on a client-agent model, it will scale to meet our systems management needs in the future, irrespective of how much we grow,” says Nickels.

Results

Centralised update management enhances security

With Landscape Dedicated Server, PlusServer can be sure that all Ubuntu servers are provisioned with the latest security updates. As well as protecting critical internal systems and data, this safeguards the operations of PlusServer customers running on Ubuntu.

“Landscape Dedicated Server helps us keep servers up to date and minimise the risk of security breaches,” says Nickels. “We can also protect the 15 per cent of PlusServer customers who run on Ubuntu servers, ensuring that their systems are secure and that they always perform in line with our service-level agreements.”

Optimised system configuration boosts server performance

Landscape Dedicated Server has helped PlusServer increase control over system configurations with intuitive, centralised management tools. “Landscape allows us to select the packages we want and deploy them to servers or groups of servers centrally,” says Nickels. “With more control over system configurations, we have improved troubleshooting, reduced management complexity and saved a lot of time.”

Management time savings increases focus on innovation

The automation of routine server management tasks has freed PlusServer IT staff to focus on more strategic activities. “Our business is all about developing new, innovative services and winning additional market share,” says Nickels. “Landscape saves us many hours a week that we can now spend optimising our existing services and developing brand new offerings to increase our competitive advantage.”

Low-cost deployment delivers rapid returns on investment

Landscape Dedicated Server is a cost-effective solution that is fast and easy to deploy. “We deployed Landscape on our existing hardware platform, so there was no need for additional servers and no hidden costs,” says Nickels. “We are expecting to achieve fast returns on our investment in Landscape.”

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