

JBoss DELIVERS 'BRICKS AND MORTAR'

PERFORMANCE AND RELIABILITY TO ALL HOMES' NEW INFRASTRUCTURE BUILD

FAST FACTS

Industry	Real estate
Geography	Australian Capital Territory (ACT), Australia
Business Challenge	Rebuild the All Homes Pty Ltd technology platform in order to modernise its website, ensuring an optimal user experience and equipping the site with support for future expansion plans
Migration Path	Outdated, costly software and hardware solutions to enterprise Linux servers, including Red Hat Enterprise Linux, as well as JBoss Enterprise Application Platform and JBoss Hibernate Framework
Solution	Software: JBoss Enterprise Application Platform, Hibernate, Red Hat Enterprise Linux Hardware: IBM xSeries x3550 and x3560 servers
Benefits	Experienced increased performance, reliability, flexibility, scalability, and cost-effectiveness



BACKGROUND

As a sales and rental listing service dedicated to residential property in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and surrounding regions, All Homes Pty Ltd has one of the most popular real estate websites in Australia. In July 2008, www.allhomes.com.au was rated 25th on Top100Australian.com's list of the 100 most popular Australian websites.

The All Homes website is delivered through several portals, including a public site, a site for real estate agents and a back-end management interface. It also incorporates the online classifieds operation www.allclassifieds.com.au.

"Generally users only see a small part of the All Homes offering – behind the scenes there are seven portals that are interrelated to create the site and the application itself is some 360 screens," said David Elliot, Managing Director of Agile Digital Engineering, All Homes' technology partner.

"This is where the majority of the work takes place and the reason why the site's success demands a rock-solid foundation."

Managing an estimated 1.4 million page impressions per day, with anywhere between 30,000 to 40,000 unique users, the All Homes technology platform has a loyal user base and is highly regarded for its speed and reliability.

"Users have high expectations of the site, so we set the bar very high when it comes to the technology we put behind the site," said Elliot.

CHALLENGE

In November 2006, All Homes embarked on an ambitious project to completely rebuild its www.allhomes.com.au technology platform. The aim was not only to modernise the site, but also to replace the existing, stale technology with dynamic new systems that could deliver an optimal user experience and support future expansion plans.

¹ Top100Australian.com's list of the top 100 Australian sites posted on 27 July 2008 at <http://www.top100australian.com/allhomes.com.au.html>





“We needed a totally fresh approach to our infrastructure, which meant overhauling the hardware and software that we’d been using since 2000,” said Tim White, Business Development Manager, All Homes Pty Ltd.

All Homes had strict criteria for the new technology, including the ability to deliver impressive performance results to exceed the abilities of its previous solution. Additionally, All Homes demanded access to cutting-edge Java technologies to enable fast and efficient site development, along with easy, ongoing maintenance. Flexibility was also a priority for the allhomes.com.au technology platform, as along with the capabilities to scale up or down according to fluctuations in user activity.

“The average number of daily page impressions is nearly one and a half million, with about 40 page views per user, per session. That number can skyrocket and the technology that drives the site must be able to handle that sort of workload without any hiccups,” said White.

All Homes is a 24/7 service and its user base expects 100 percent uptime. When considering a new solution, stability and durability were also key considerations.

SOLUTION

Working with its technical partner, Agile Digital Engineering, All Homes implemented its new infrastructure, including Red Hat Enterprise Linux based on IBM System x Intel servers distributed between Sydney and the ACT. The infrastructure also incorporated clustered application servers, based on JBoss Enterprise Application Platform and JBoss Hibernate Framework to handle page creation.

“We were excited about working with JBoss solutions, because they offered the cutting-edge Java technologies, like Hibernate with annotations, that we needed to build the screens quickly and ensure ease-of-maintenance going forward,” said Elliot.

“It also meant All Homes could be a leading technology innovator in the real estate industry, with access to tomorrow’s technology and the ability to introduce new operational possibilities into its business.”

BENEFITS

After launching into production in December 2007, All Homes’ new system has exceeded expectations.

“We set the bar very high when it came to system reliability and performance, but JBoss middleware and the servers running Red Hat Enterprise Linux have already given us the assurances we were looking for.”

The business has also recognized the financial benefits of working with the open source middleware solution, compared with equivalent proprietary systems.

“It’s certainly an advantage when you don’t receive extortionate licence renewal bills every year, just for the pleasure of using the software. Working with JBoss, all we pay for is the support,” said White.

Pleased with the benefits of having JBoss Enterprise Middleware at the core of its new infrastructure, All Homes is exploring future implementation of Red Hat solutions to assist with the organization’s plans for expansion.

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