



RED HAT SOLUTIONS PROVIDE ADDED POWER FOR ITALIAN IRIDE ENERGIA

FAST FACTS

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| Industry | Utility |
| Geography | Italy |
| Opportunity | Combine varied IT systems following the merger of two companies, while modernizing obsolete equipment, reducing costs, and ensuring compatibility with existing solutions |
| Migration Path | AIX Unix and Microsoft Windows to Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5 |
| Software | Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5, SAP systems, Oracle database, Novell, Apache, MySQL, Open CMS, customized billing |
| Hardware | HP Proliant and Bull servers based on Itanium2, SAN for storage (25TB overall) |
| Benefits | Increased performance levels, system stability, and continuity, while simplifying usage, reducing overhead, and combining two radically different IT systems |



BACKGROUND

The IRIDE Group, an important player in the Italian utilities market, was formed at the end of 2006 as a result of the merger of AEM Torino and AMGA Genova. Its aim is to provide services to residents and businesses throughout local urban areas.

The IRIDE Group is composed of the parent company IRIDE S.p.A. and four sector-leader companies. IRIDE ACQUAGAS distributes gas and water. IRIDE ENERGIA produces and distributes electricity and thermal energy for district heating. IRIDE MERCATO sells electricity, gas, and district heating. And, IRIDE SERVIZI provides technological services to municipalities and telecommunication infrastructure management services.

The IRIDE ENERGIA division of The IRIDE Group produces and distributes electricity and thermal energy directly to customers. It's active in energy planning and consulting, and also carries out additional activities such as engineering, planning, and reliability studies. The company produces electricity and thermal energy through renewable energy sources like hydroelectric plants, or through equivalent sources like cogeneration plants.

OPPORTUNITY

When AEM Torino and AMGA Genova merged to form The IRIDE Group, two radically different information systems had to be seamlessly combined, while keeping performance high and costs low. AEM Torino's system was based mainly on a combination of Unix and Linux, while AMGA Genova's system was Microsoft-based. The combined company searched for a cost-effective solution that could provide a consistent, reliable platform that was compatible with its Oracle databases.

SOLUTION

AEM Torino first selected Linux in 2003 when the company saw opportunities to improve its IT infrastructure, previously based on AIX (Unix) mainframes and systems. At the time, there was a need to modernize the company's equipment, while reducing costs. There was also a desire to follow the evolution of its Oracle technology, which played an important role in the company's overall IT strategy.



After original tests provided positive results with Linux solutions, Iride Energia decided to implement Linux for its external environments, like its proxy server and application servers. Initially, the company deployed Fedora and experienced ease of use and reliability. Soon, the requirement for ongoing support made it necessary to select a commercially supported product.

“In addition to providing us with reliable support, Red Hat Enterprise Linux represents a strategic choice for us. By moving to the new platform, performance improved and systems became more stable, thus allowing us to greatly increase productivity.”

**– Roberto Ganio Mego,
Iride Energia’s system administrator**

The requirement for compatibility with Oracle solutions led the company to Red Hat. Known for its high-quality support services, Red Hat was selected by Iride Energia after tests carried out on alternative products fell short of requirements. During the migration to Red Hat solutions, SAP certification was also added to Red Hat Enterprise Linux, delivering increased value to Iride Energia.

“Our experience with Linux is a long-standing one, since we had opted to operate within an open source environment as early as 2003,” said Roberto Ganio Mego, Iride Energia’s system administrator. “We wished to update our IT infrastructure and improve its performance, while ensuring that we received excellent quality of service, such as Red Hat provides.”

The process of migrating to Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5 was very straightforward for Iride Energia. All production hardware was replaced and equipped with Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5, which today is present on all Iride Energia servers, amounting to approximately 35 subscriptions. All company applications also currently operate on Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5, including Oracle databases, various types of Web services (proxy servers, web servers, etc.), content and document management systems, and application servers. The company billing system, developed in-house using Java technology, is also highly compatible with Linux and complements the Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5 implementation.

Since migrating to Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5, Iride Energia has also launched a virtualization program that has resulted in the creation of 150 virtual machines installed on 15 physical hosts.

BENEFITS

The advantages of moving to Red Hat Enterprise Linux were immediately evident for Iride Energia. With the ability to successfully combine two different companies with very different IT systems, the entire IT infrastructure immediately benefited from increased stability, resulting in a significant increase in productivity. Simultaneously, cost savings due to the elimination of software licenses allowed for the company’s hardware equipment to be updated, further increasing system performance.

“Following the merger of AEM Torino and AMGA Genova, the Iride Energia IT department was faced with the monumental task of integrating two disparate sets of IT systems and data. By moving all of the systems to Red Hat Enterprise Linux, we have been able to simplify operations, reduce costs, and increase performance, while ensuring compatibility with our Oracle and SAP databases,” said Ganio Mego.