



# RED HAT HELPS TRIBUNE INTERACTIVE SLASH COSTS AND REDUCE TIME TO MARKET

## FAST FACTS

Industry	Media
Geography	Chicago
Business Challenge	Reduce costs and time-to-market of new interactive products by moving to a virtualized environment based on x86 machines and open source Linux
Software	Red Hat Enterprise Linux Advanced Platform, Red Hat Enterprise Linux, Red Hat Network (RHN) Satellite
Hardware	Commodity Dell and IBM x86 systems
Benefits	Cut capital as well as ongoing operational infrastructure costs, and boost competitiveness by flexibly bringing new products to market more quickly



## BACKGROUND

As the largest employee-owned media firm in the United States, the Chicago-based Tribune Company operates a broad range of businesses in the print publishing, interactive media, and broadcasting market segments. In addition to 10 daily newspapers – including three in the top 10 markets in the country – 23 television stations, and the Chicago Cubs baseball team, the company runs more than 50 websites serving 15.5 million unique visitors per month.

Founded in 1847, Tribune Company employs approximately 20,000 workers and earned more than \$5.5 billion dollars in fiscal 2006. It is No. 388 on the Fortune 500 list. Three-fourths of the Companies revenues come from print publishing and interactive media; the remainder from traditional broadcasting/entertainment offerings.

The fastest-growing division within the Tribune Company, Tribune Interactive, offers dynamic online content – both local and national – including news and information, broadcast audio and video, entertainment, multicultural offerings, and classified advertising.

## OPPORTUNITY

In 2005, under a mandate to cut costs and get new innovative online products to market faster, Tribune Interactive decided to experiment with a new IT platform. Although predominantly a Sun Solaris/SPARCstation shop, Alan Pitcher, Tribune Interactive director of technical operations, brought in commodity x86 systems running open source Linux – specifically, Red Hat Enterprise Linux – to build a new developing and hosting environment.

“We recognized that our existing platform was expensive, and built specifically for our newspaper products, in fact, it was preventing us from being nimble for any project not related to our newspaper sites,” said Pitcher. A number of internal partners were asking him for a system architecture that would allow them to prototype new interactive product ideas quickly and easily. “Red Hat Enterprise Linux was the obvious choice, as it included the virtualization technology and OS support in a low cost offer,” said Pitcher.

## SOLUTION

Pitcher's team "racked and stacked" x86 systems running Red Hat Enterprise Linux Advanced Platform, which offers comprehensive virtualization technology integrated in the operating system at no additional cost. This allowed Tribune Interactive to deploy virtualization "out of the box," using the technology that came built-in with the operating system. This solution had the further advantage of offering maximum flexibility and reliability with high-availability clustering and failover delivered through Red Hat's Global File System (GFS) and Red Hat Cluster Suite – both also included in Red Hat Enterprise Linux Advanced Platform for no added cost. Tribune Interactive is currently running a total of 80 virtual machines and has plans to further expand its utilization of Red Hat Enterprise Linux virtualization technology. It also uses Red Hat Network Satellite to provision and manage the installation.

## BENEFITS

The benefits of using Red Hat Enterprise Linux Advanced Platform were immediately apparent, particularly in the speed of developing new applications. "This has given us the ability to set up a prototyping environment for new products in a couple of hours rather than days or weeks," said Pitcher. And, whether provisioning a new machine or provisioning new processes on existing machines, it's easy to give internal partners the ability to "get new applications and products out there quickly," he said.

---

**"Red Hat Enterprise Linux was the obvious choice, as it included the virtualization technology and OS support in a low cost offer,"**

**- Alan Pitcher,  
director of technical operation  
Tribune Interactive**

---

Pitcher recalls how an internal Tribune Interactive team was developing a new broadcast application to run on a Windows environment hosted by an external vendor. "The architecture and application were shaping up to be a huge failure," said Pitcher. He offered the project team the virtualized Red Hat Enterprise Linux environment, where they started from scratch, caught up and launched the project on time, all within 30 days. "It was an eye-opening experience for many people to see how flexibly and rapidly we could deploy this application," he said. "It could not have happened if we hadn't had the foresight to have this pre-made environment ready to accept a product at the drop of a hat."



"The ability to turn projects around very quickly has a significant financial impact for generating increased revenues down the road," said Pitcher. Additionally, the hardware savings - both from purchasing lower-cost commodity servers and the Red Hat Enterprise Linux integrated virtualization capabilities - have been substantial. "Because we're carving up these cheaper machines into multiple machines we've saved a lot of money," said Pitcher. Utilization is also dramatically improved. According to Mark Sennott, senior Internet administrator, whereas before the Tribune Company was using just 20 percent of its servers, "today, our utilization rate is closer to 80 percent."

When coupled with new agile software development techniques that Tribune programmers are using, the Red Hat Enterprise Linux-based platform has "everyone embracing a new way of working," said Pitcher. And in terms of reliability, Sennott added, "we haven't had a single outage yet."

The company is in the process of bringing more applications in-house to run on the virtualized Red Hat Enterprise Linux environment. It is already running all its blogs using Moveable Type. Next year, Sennott will be building a virtualized datacenter based on x86 hardware and Red Hat Enterprise Linux virtualization in Los Angeles, and will take over hosting the Tribune Interactive sites from AT&T. "This will more than double our Red Hat installation," said Pitcher.

"The efficiency gains are just going to get better," said Sennott. "As I get more comfortable with Red Hat, I'm confident I can load the machines up a lot further. At the moment, I'm installing four virtual machines per box; but I'm convinced I could easily go to five or even six successfully."

"If you're looking for an inexpensive way to get the most out of commodity hardware, Red Hat virtualization is a fantastic solution," said Pitcher.



## RED HAT SALES AND INQUIRIES

---

### North America

1-888-REDHAT1  
[www.redhat.com](http://www.redhat.com)

### Europe, Middle East and Africa

00800 7334 2835  
[www.europe.redhat.com](http://www.europe.redhat.com)  
[europe@redhat.com](mailto:europe@redhat.com)

### Asia Pacific

+65 6490 4200  
[www.apac.redhat.com](http://www.apac.redhat.com)  
[sales-ap@redhat.com](mailto:sales-ap@redhat.com)

### Latin America

+54 11 4341 6200  
[www.latam.redhat.com](http://www.latam.redhat.com)  
[info-latam@redhat.com](mailto:info-latam@redhat.com)