Adobe Systems, a long-time user of Red Hat® Enterprise Linux®, wanted to offer its enterprise customers easy access to sandbox resources to evaluate and prototype solutions using Adobe products. Turning to the cloud, Adobe used Red Hat Enterprise Linux and Amazon Web Services (AWS) to not only deliver a sandbox solution, but also to offer customers a Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) option for deploying Adobe-based solutions. Today, Adobe is using the Red Hat platform and Amazon Web Services to help customers simplify deployment, lower cost of ownership, and accelerate time to value.

“We've seen a real change in attitude over the years—initially the cloud was new and frightening, but because our customers were comfortable and experienced with Red Hat, we were able to drive things forward that much more easily.”

MITCH NELSON
DIRECTOR OF MANAGED SERVICES, ADOBE SYSTEMS
Adobe Offers Its Software in the Cloud

Founded in 1982, Adobe Systems is well known for its digital media and marketing solutions, including CQ, LiveCycle, Photoshop, and Acrobat. In 2007, Mitch Nelson, an early adopter and proponent of cloud computing, became Director of Managed Services on the enterprise side of the house at Adobe. His first challenge was to find a way for enterprise customer developers to easily link into the company’s LiveCycle sandbox to try Adobe products.

Nelson turned to Red Hat Enterprise Linux and Amazon Web Services (AWS) to solve the problem. “By bringing LiveCycle, Red Hat, and AWS together, we were able to rapidly deploy a sandbox system for developers and get them up and running quickly and easily,” said Nelson.

That was just the beginning for Nelson and his team: “Once you’ve done something well, you tend to get more work. The question came up, now that we’ve built this solution in the cloud, how do we take it from sandbox to production?” Adobe also wanted to offer applications to its customers via a SaaS model to take advantage of benefits such as subscription-based pricing, simplified deployments, and scalability. In addition, the company wished to employ an open hybrid cloud model that would have the flexibility to operate seamlessly both on-premise and in the cloud.

Adobe Develops Global Applications Delivered Real Time in the Cloud

Nelson formed a team to supply customers with cloud-based versions of Adobe products, which they could then customize. Adobe would help move the applications into production and manage them going forward.

Nelson began working with Amazon Web Services, and in 2008 launched production operations. The initial result was Adobe LiveCycle Enterprise Suite (ES3), an SOA Java EE-based server software product used to build applications that automate business processes for enterprises and government agencies. Later came Adobe CQ, the foundation of the Adobe Experience Manager solution, with further applications on the way.

Using the Red Hat platform for Adobe’s cloud offerings was an obvious choice for Nelson for a number of reasons. First, Red Hat allows Adobe to employ an open hybrid cloud model. “Red Hat Enterprise Linux is a scalable, consistent platform that gives us the required flexibility to operate in both environments, whether on-premise at a customer site, or in the cloud,” said Nelson.

In addition, being able to standardize on one operating system was a significant advantage. “Red Hat allows us to give our customers a well-known framework to test on their desktops or development systems using the same operating system or product stack all the way up, as they do in the cloud. That saves Adobe two to three million dollars a year, being able to standardize like that and operate in a known framework.”

In addition, enterprises considering deployment in the cloud with Adobe need assurance that the security is comprehensive. Nelson said he completes client questionnaires with anywhere from 50 to 750 questions designed to understand Adobe’s processes, and he can’t emphasize enough the importance of a secure platform. “When we’re dealing with a customer, the longest part of the sales cycle is getting the customer comfortable with the security of the platform in the cloud. When we say Red Hat, it clicks with the customer and shuts off half of their security questions,” said Nelson.

Mitch Nelson
Director of Managed Services, Adobe Systems

“Almost everybody asks what your operating system is, and when they hear it’s Red Hat, there are no further questions.”
Nelson goes on to cite the stability of Red Hat Enterprise Linux. “We’re offering configurations up to a four-nines, cross-geographic high availability environment, and we wouldn’t go there if we weren’t absolutely confident in our operating system. The stability of every component in the stack becomes critical at that point, and the reliability of Red Hat Enterprise Linux has been rock-solid,” said Nelson.

Finally, the scalability of the Red Hat platform allows Adobe to sense the load on a customer’s server and respond appropriately, via either slow or rapid scaling, bringing servers on-line to handle the load of the day, then shutting them down in the evenings to make them available to other users in the cloud.

ADOBE BENEFITS FROM RAPID ENTERPRISE ADOPTION OF ITS SUBSCRIPTION-BASED CLOUD SOLUTIONS

Like many Independent Software Vendors (ISVs), Adobe has historically been a shrink-wrap software purveyor. With the emergence of SaaS, Adobe’s customers reap a number of significant benefits, including simplified deployment, lower total cost of ownership, on-demand scalability, and accelerated time to value. The SaaS model suits Adobe as well, as revenue shifts from a single transaction to a classic annuity model that offers different revenue opportunities.

As a result of the partnership with Red Hat and Amazon Web Services, Adobe now has dozens of enterprise customers using its cloud-based products and services and anticipates the number to more than double next year.

“We’ve gone in directions that were well beyond our initial ideas when we started out. We are now able to work with major enterprises and deploy significant mission-critical parts of their business into a cloud infrastructure with confidence,” said Nelson.

Looking forward, Nelson says Adobe Managed Services sees Red Hat as its preferred platform for as many offerings as possible. “We look at Red Hat Enterprise Linux as our deployment operating system of choice and look to move as many of our solutions onto that platform as possible, if they’re not there already,” said Nelson.
ABOUT ADOBE

Founded in 1982 and headquartered in San Jose, CA, Adobe offers digital media and digital marketing solutions designed to empower businesses to make, manage, measure, and monetize content. At Vanity Fair, Martha Stewart Living, and other leading publications, for example, Adobe software is used to develop interactive content delivered in print, online, and on tablets. At the same time, industry leaders such as Sony, U.S. Bank, and Caesar’s Entertainment are turning to Adobe® Digital Marketing solutions to maximize sales in a multichannel, multiscreen world.