

Customer Success Story

Service Provider Data393 Uses Virtuozzo to Deliver Software as a Service (SaaS)

Converting an Internal Application into a Value-Add Customer Offering in Less than Two Hours

Business Challenge

After repeatedly experiencing support issues with an external service provider, Data393 decided to bring their data protection platform in-house and integrate it into their custom-built Billing and Customer Online Notification (affectionately named BACON). The BACON application records backup and restore statistics that enables Data393 to track, report and bill for customer usage. After receiving a request for a similar solution from a customer, Data393 saw the opportunity to provide their BACON application as software as a service. Data393 was faced with making an internal, single tenant application available to external users in the most time and cost-effective manner.

Evaluation

Data393 identified and evaluated three possible options for converting BACON into a SaaS. First, they could redesign and rewrite the software to allow multiple tenants on a single instance of the software. Second, they could deploy multiple instances using IP based, or Name based, hosting facilities within Apache, or third, they could virtualize an application instance.

Data393 quickly ruled out any software rewrites based on the required time to achieve multi-tenancy. Using Apache virtual hosts might be a quick way to deploy the software; however, questions often arise from customers when sensitive data is on a shared system. Virtuozzo's ability to isolate each environment gave Data393 the speed of using virtual hosts and the isolation of using a dedicated environment. A Virtuozzo user since 2004, Data393 decided to use virtualization to solve their challenge. "It took only 5 minutes to think about it-- it was very clear that virtualization was the way to go," said Steve Merkel, Chief Information Officer. "We advocate leveraging every technical investment that we make to the fullest and this seemed like yet another way to use Virtuozzo".

Virtuozzo Solution and Implementation

Data393 designated a Linux server with a multi-core processor and a few gigs of RAM for its BACON SaaS server. They used Virtuozzo's management tools to quickly create a template and sample virtual environment configuration including use of full system resources. They were then able to provision a multitude of identical virtual environments in minutes. Setting up the Linux OS and BACON templates took less than 2 hours. Provisioning each additional virtual environment took just under

Data393

Fast Facts

Company: Data393

Industry: Service Provider

Challenge: Offer an internal single-tenant application to external users via a SaaS delivery model

SWsoft Solution: Virtuozzo

Results: SaaS application delivered to customer within 2 hours

About Data393

Data393 is known for its dynamic approach towards providing collocation, managed infrastructure services, and dedicated servers. A SAS 70 Type II certified facility, Data393 is run by a leadership team that looks for innovative ways to provide new products and services to its customer base. Ranked in the Top 100 Most Innovative Corporate IT Solutions by InfoWorld, Data393 uses Virtuozzo to provide reliable, scalable production virtual environments and deliver SaaS applications to its business and service provider customers.

"We picked Virtuozzo for its server density. We keep Virtuozzo because of its versatility."

— Steve Merkel,
Chief Information Officer,
Data393

2 minutes. With Virtuozzo's speed of setup and ability to make wide scale operating system updates and deliver pre-configured applications on demand, Data393 had the basics for their SaaS delivery model.

Results

The BACON application allowed Data393 to track overages and gain more insight into customers' backup usage. The application allowed Data393 to begin to understand "unclaimed" revenue that had gone unbilled for overages and set a baseline for tracking such overages within their customer base. BACON was built to also automatically notify customers of approaching overages so that they could alter their usage or receive fair warning for the coming of additional charges on their bill. The combination of advanced overage notification and automated billing to the customer for actual incurred overages was a win-win for Data393 by recouping formerly unclaimed revenue and providing a much appreciated value-add service to the customer base.

With Virtuozzo, Data393 was able to quickly deliver BACON to a customer with the same need to track overages via a SaaS delivery model. Data393's customers began to use BACON to set baseline metrics on server usage and to accurately bill for overages. The application's strong and reliable performance via Virtuozzo has increased Data393's value from their customers' viewpoint and strengthened their relationship.

"Virtuozzo is allowing Data393 to change with the times through its ease of use and open architecture. "Our target customer has changed over the last 6 years. We are seeing our customer base shift from individuals and companies to ISVs that want to distribute their products and hosting providers that want to specialize services and offset certain types of risk without cutting down the array of products that they offer. This new virtualization provider upon virtualization provider model is still a new way to do business," says Merkel, "Virtuozzo makes it possible for us to adapt and succeed in this model."

Future Plans

With the success of packaging BACON as a SaaS and distributing it to their customers, Data393 plans to distribute the application to other service provider customers. The next version of BACON is currently under development and will be distributed via Virtuozzo as a value-add SaaS offering. The next step for Data393 is to continue to evolve their SaaS delivery model for infrastructure software to facilitate an improved delivery mechanism that allows for automated usage tracking and chargeback functionality.

Learn more at www.srosoft.com/virtuozzo

Virtuozzo Solutions:

- Internal and Commercial Hosting
- Server and OS Consolidation
- Development and Testing
- Software as a Service (SaaS)

"We took our custom app and delivered it using a SaaS model in under an hour."

— Steve Merkel,
Chief Information Officer,
Data393



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