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Company: MaximumASP
Web Site: www.maximumasp.com
Customer Size: 30 employees
Country or Region: United States
Industry: Hosting

Company Profile

Louisville, Kentucky-based MaximumASP provides hosting solutions on more than 1,500 server computers. The company hosts approximately 44,000 domains for customers in more than 60 countries.

Software and Services

- Microsoft® Server Product Portfolio
 - Windows Server® 2008 Standard
 - Microsoft SQL Server® 2008

Hardware

- Dell PowerEdge servers
- AMD Dual Core processors

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Web Hosting Firm Empowers Customers with Operating System Upgrade

“From development to provisioning to performance, we’re excited to see so many efficiencies that help us and our customers.”

Chris Morrow, Lead Developer, MaximumASP

MaximumASP always tries to stay a step ahead of the competition, so the Web hosting firm recently upgraded 15 server computers to the Windows Server® 2008 Standard operating system for customers to use and test. The company and its customers now benefit from increased application response times of up to 40 percent, improved application management, and greater productivity due to a new user interface and more flexible development capabilities.

Business Needs

Web-hosting firm MaximumASP offers state-of-the-art services to customers who use Microsoft® technologies. The firm’s hosting solutions combine advanced monitoring and management tools to provide a robust hosting platform for mission-critical Web applications.

MaximumASP strives to put customers in control of their own information. “If we empower our customers, they can ensure that their sites always have the right content at the right time,” says Dominic Foster, Lead Engineer for MaximumASP.

Providing customers with the ability to manage their own sites has sometimes

proved difficult. All of the company’s servers have been running on the Windows Server® 2003 operating system with Internet Information Services (IIS) 6.0. Although a customer could control its account, Web sites, database, and configuration with a MaximumASP-developed administration console, the company sought a more comprehensive way for customers—including non-administrative users—to manage sites and information. “We wanted more flexibility for our customers,” says Chris Morrow, Lead Developer for MaximumASP.

MaximumASP looked to improve efficiencies in its management and development of Web applications. “Any

time we can help our customers automate repeated tasks, increase speed of site setup, or reduce the amount of code necessary to get the job done, we're making their lives easier and ourselves more valuable," says Morrow. "And we're always in favor of anything that we can do to enhance security and safeguard our customers' sites."

Solution

In keeping with the company's aggressive support for the latest technologies, MaximumASP decided to offer its customers free pre-release test accounts for the Windows Server 2008 Standard operating system with IIS 7.0. The company is providing those accounts on 15 server computers in a safeguarded, hosted environment. It's also delivering the back-end infrastructure and management to ensure maximum reliability and scalability for end users.

"Our customers count on us to provide them with a competitive edge," says Foster. "By making new technology available ahead of other companies, we're helping our customers learn about and experiment with the new operating system before it goes to market." As of November 2007, MaximumASP has had approximately 1,200 users on its IIS 7.0 shared hosting trial on Windows Server 2008.

One customer that is taking advantage of the early opportunity is CyberTV, a company that develops custom Web applications and hosts 1,100 sites with MaximumASP. CyberTV uses remote data storage for its Web sites, and was looking for a better way to manage that process. "I was curious to see if the new version of IIS made it easier to handle remote issues," says Deke Hooper, Chief Technology Officer for CyberTV.

In August 2007, CyberTV started to move 25 development sites over to the new operating system, along with one high-volume production site. "There was very little setup necessary," recalls Hooper. "All I had to do was select a remote path in IIS 7.0, change the DNS settings and configuration options, and I was ready to go."

Benefits

MaximumASP and its customers have found that IIS 7.0 helps streamline application development for greater productivity. They also deliver faster application response times for better value for customers. "From development to provisioning to performance, we're excited to see so many efficiencies that help us and our customers," says Morrow. "We're also pleased that we're now able to start offering them a sneak peek at Microsoft SQL Server® 2008."

Faster application development.

MaximumASP reduced its core provisioning processes by 75 percent through the use of the new administration application programming interface (Microsoft.Web.Administration). The company has also taken advantage of the extensibility of the administration user interface to provide custom modules that cater to its users.

"The ability to have the same Web server on our development workstation and on the server, combined with robust development tools has reduced our time in all phases of development, from design through test to deployment," says Morrow.

Increased management productivity.

MaximumASP and CyberTV both are enjoying the operating system's new user

interface, which minimizes the steps necessary to complete tasks. "Over the course of a large project, needing only one-third the number of mouse clicks is a huge benefit for us," says Hooper. That productivity enhancement extends to the amount of time that it takes to establish Web servers, set up new sites, and share configuration files. Adds Hooper, "We've noticed a dramatic decrease of about 80 percent in the total time that it takes to set up new sites and handle load balancing."

MaximumASP is taking advantage of the command-line utility to save time on repeated tasks. "Before, we had to have a programmer to create batch files and automate processes," says Foster. "But with IIS 7.0, anyone can do it, which makes management faster and easier."

Enhanced security and reliability. With the new system's flexible setup, MaximumASP feels that there is a reduced risk of issues. "We can install Windows Server 2008 at a more granular level than previous operating systems," says Foster. "By specifying the function of a particular server, we can install only what we need, which means that the servers are more stable and less open to vulnerabilities."

Improved performance. MaximumASP and its customers have noticed that the new system delivers faster application response time for better site performance. "Using Windows Server 2008 instantly sped up my sites by more than 40 percent. It's like getting a code rewrite with no work," says Hooper. "Everything that we create requires on-site editing, and the fact that pages load so much more quickly results in significant timesavings for us every day."