Connectria hosts diverse customer needs

With IBM Power Systems and IBM i

Overview

The need

Connectria needed powerful, reliable systems to support and protect mission-critical IT hosting operations with efficiency and superior economics for a broad range of customers.

The solution

In the past year, Connectria has deployed 15 IBM® POWER7® Systems™ running the IBM i 7.1 operating system to support a large and diverse array of customer requirements.

The benefit

IBM Power Systems™ and IBM i have been providing reliable computing power to Connectria for almost 15 years, helping to manage budget constraints while delivering new services for evolving needs.

Since 1998, Connectria has been performing a broad array of hosting services, from custom and managed hosting to cloud computing. Customers depend on Connectria to provide reliable hosting solutions that solve a broad range of unique business problems efficiently and cost-effectively—so Connectria needs reliable equipment. Every feature of Connectria's enterprise-class hosting facilities has been designed to support and protect their clients' mission-critical IT operations—systems, networks, applications and databases.

A winning business model

Connectria has always relied on IBM to support their business model, which usually involves providing the platforms and operating systems customers need to run their equipment and applications. Denny Hug, vice president, data center services at Connectria, explains: "We provide customers our managed services in a couple of different ways. If they want to supply the hardware and software licenses, then we will deploy and run them for the customer. In that case, they would own the contract, but we would execute the maintenance agreement on their behalf." He adds that other customers prefer to have a totally managed service, so Connectria bills them for ongoing managed services as well as a hardware-software cost; in that case, Connectria procures the hardware-software licensing themselves.

IBM has been a large part of their business. Dave Wiseman, director, IT infrastructure, says, "We're seeing a trend that many companies don't want to be in the IT business anymore; they want to focus on running their business, with IT becoming more of a commodity. IBM Power Systems and IBM i are a big piece of that. We consider the IBM i hosting side to be one of our core competencies and business units." They currently support 80 IBM Power Systems and 150 virtual machines.

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—Dave Wiseman, director, IT infrastructure, Connectria

Hug says, "What some of our customers have said that they find interesting about us is that not only can we provide the service levels required for the IBM i environment, but also for the other pieces of the puzzle that they have, such as any other platforms in their infrastructure. If they are looking to outsource those OSs and that type of hardware with their IBM i services, Connectria can do that. We don't dictate the architecture if it's already been chosen by the customer; but if they're looking for help in designing or migrating platforms, we can help them with that."

They do have a lot of customers who prefer IBM. "One of the things that we always hear from our IBM i customers is that over the years they've made an investment, and it's a rock-solid platform. It just runs. They don't want to give up the platform, they like it—they just want us to manage it for them, so they can take that money and invest it in other areas within their business," Hug says. This customer loyalty, coupled with the success Connectria has had with IBM over the years, is why they have continued investing with IBM.

Increasing workloads

While the company has proven itself in the area of reliability, one particular customer challenge pushed Connectria to focus on workload performance. Connectria needed to help one of their customers improve workload performance for a new enterprise resource planning solution. Once Connectria purchased the new IBM POWER7 architecture and the customer migrated to the new POWER7 hardware, Wiseman says that they were able to exponentially increase the load to more than 250 users with no indication of reduced performance.

Over the past year, Connectria has added 15 IBM POWER7 systems running the IBM i 7.1 operating system because as Wiseman says, "IBM just keeps delivering more robust hardware that's faster, with more capacity. The processing capacity on the POWER7 hardware is amazing. IBM has continued to deliver technology that far exceeds our expectations—we can now deliver our services faster than ever."

Solution components

Hardware
• IBM® POWER7® Systems™

Software
• IBM i

Services
• IBM Global Financing

Connectria has also been very happy with IBM Global Financing, which they've used to help them acquire many of their larger systems.

Lowering operating costs

The POWER7 Systems are also turning operational costs into new business investments. Wiseman says, "Overall, on the POWER7 platform, I see a trend of cost savings to my customers and myself because I don't need to license as many cores."

Connectria is also leveraging cost savings through IBM i hosted partitions, which enable scalable virtualization. As Wiseman explains, "We're able to spin up a hosted partition and give customers another partition running on the exact same hardware, with absolutely no increased cost to them. So, hosted partitions have come in very, very handy for us and our customer base."

Looking to the future

While Connectria has been doing cloud deployments for years, IBM is helping the company evolve its IT infrastructure and expand its cloud offerings. In addition to their current IBM i cloud offering, Connectria plans to roll out new solutions based on the IBM Power® platform. One high-availability solution includes fault-tolerant clustered POWER7 servers, while another solution features full disaster-recovery capabilities, replicating virtual machines between POWER7 Systems in multiple data centers.

Fostering future relationships

Connectria plans to continue their successful relationship with IBM and its products. Hug says, "We have a very good working relationship with IBM, and it's a testament to their tactical capabilities. We really appreciate the knowledge and the professional support for both hardware and software. But also from a strategic standpoint—IBM is always thinking ahead about technology, and they always seem to have things hit in the timeframe that's appropriate for the marketplace."

For more information

Contact your IBM representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit us at:
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For more information about Connectria, visit: www.connectria.com

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