HIGH-AVAILABILITY

Success Story



The world never stops...

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS CENTENARY 1904-2004

The Customer

Leeds University – www.leeds.ac.uk - has been a user of High-Availability.Com's (HAC) RSF-1 (Resilient Server Facility) since 1997. Initially supporting a dual Sun E3000 configuration and now a twin SunFire V480 system, HAC's market-leading high availability solution ensures uptime for the university's SAP R3-based financial applications.

RSF-1 was originally released in 1995 and is designed to make services 'highly available' by switching between servers if a server or service fails. It provides multi-directional redundant ability that allows servers to constantly monitor and shadow each other. Rather than simply maintain a standby option idle as a failover server, RSF-1 allows operational systems to act as standby servers, ensuring that hardware investment is optimised.

RSF-1 includes both Java and Windows based system administration modules that allow the cluster to be monitored and administered in real time – showing the status of any RSF-1 instances available on the network and providing manual switchover functions.

High-Availability.Com – www.high-availability.com - designed and developed the first high availability solution for Sun Unix servers and has been leading the mission-critical market ever since with innovative products to help customers maximise their business IT and Internet functions.

The company sells and supports products to customers throughout the world, ensuring critical applications and services keep running in the event of system failures. "We needed a high availability system that was absolutely reliable, easy to use and flexible," says the university's Senior Computer Officer Simon Rylands.

Sun microsystems Partner Advantage

ORACLE®



The Solution

"The university has been using it since 1997 and when we moved to the new SunFire hardware, implementation of the latest version of RSF-1 was a natural choice. We knew it worked; we were comfortable and confident with it and we had a good relationship with HAC who installed the latest version rapidly and did all the work".
A particular feature of RSF-1 that the university regards as useful is the ease with which a user can switch between automatic or manual switch-over. "In fact we use it manually to keep close control," says Rylands. "When a server or service fails, RSF-1 detects the breakdown and can either restart all associated services on an available cluster node or alert an operator. It also monitors the health of individual services on a node via service agents. If a failure is detected, RSF-1 can either restart the service or fail it over to another node in the cluster".

"We also liked the transparency – RSF-1 just sits in the background and if we need to go into it, the GUI is intuitive and simple. Overall, the system is easy to use, reliable and has a high level of functionality".

The Benefits

Many UK Universities use RSF-1 for a wide range of crucial applications from maintaining integrity of coursework and distance learning programmes to ensuring content viability of firewalls and student portals, as well as a host of other vital tasks. Literally tens of thousands of those in the UK's university student and teaching bodies now rely on RSF-1. Other university users include Edinburgh, Sunderland, Sheffield, Hallam, Salford, Manchester, Nottingham and West of England.

At Sunderland University, for example, RSF-1 ensures that 16,000 students are able to access their personal data around the clock, 365 days a year. Not only can they check and modify personal details, but they can also purchase goods and services and pay bills via the records system.

This particular solution is now the benchmark for SITS, the provider of student records systems – www.sits.co.uk. Another example is that of University West of England where the RSF-1 solution ensures that 30,000 student email boxes are continuously active.

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