



Windows Server 2008 Customer Solution Case Study



Customer: Applied Innovations
Web Site: www.appliedi.net
Customer Size: 20 employees
Country or Region: United States
Industry: Professional services – IT services

Customer Profile

Applied Innovations is a hosting-services provider to customers of all sizes. It manages more than 400 Windows®-based servers that are host to more than 10,000 domains.

Software and Services

- Products
 - Internet Information Services 7.0
 - Windows Server 2008
 - Windows Vista

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Hosting Services Company Helps Customers Cut Costs with Versatile New Platform

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Carlos Caneja, Chief Technology Officer, Applied Innovations

Applied Innovations is a leading provider of Web hosting services. To address growing customer demand for hosting solutions and services with limited administration costs, the company deployed the Windows Server® 2008 operating system with Internet Information Services 7.0. With the new platform, Applied Innovation will help customers simplify administration and provide a more secure, versatile, and cost-effective hosting service.

Business Needs

Headquartered in Boca Raton, Florida, Applied Innovations is a Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner and a leading provider of Web hosting and e-commerce. The company offers shared hosting, Windows Virtual Private Servers, and Managed Windows Dedicated Servers, and supports such technologies as ASP.NET, Microsoft SQL Server® database software, PHP, and MySQL on the Windows® hosting platform.

Applied Innovations is committed to providing its customers a powerful, flexible, and innovative approach to Web hosting services. To support this objective, the

company has become one of the first hosting providers to deploy the Windows Server® 2008 operating system with Internet Information Services (IIS) 7.0, on servers that are used internally as well as those used for customer sites.

According to Jess Coburn, Chief Executive Officer at Applied Innovations, the motivation for this early deployment stemmed from a challenge familiar to many executives and developers in the Web hosting community: the demands of a highly diverse customer base for tools and technologies that are easy to administer and manage. “Our customers need the best online business tools available

and it's our job to provide them those tools," he says.

Solution

When Coburn and his colleagues first learned about the manageability advantages of IIS 7.0, including its delegated site management capabilities and other tools for simplifying management from the desktop, they saw a way to successfully provide the same benefits for their customers.

As an early adopter of IIS 7.0 and Windows Server 2008, Applied Innovations upgraded its corporate and support servers, as well as selected servers used by its hosted customers, from Windows Server 2003 and IIS 6.0 to Windows Server 2008 and IIS 7.0. It also took advantage of performance enhancements by migrating its customer support portal to IIS 7.0.

Benefits

Efficient management simplifies

administration. According to Carlos Caneja, Chief Technology Officer at Applied Innovations, efficient management of Web servers historically required a full-time host administrator or third-party technology. Now, thanks to the built-in delegated site management capabilities of IIS 7.0, this role can be managed by the developer or content owner, saving customers time and money.

"IIS 7.0 will revolutionize Web hosting, enabling Applied Innovations and its customers to avoid the costs of third-party administration products and the security risks of having to expose DCOM [Distributed Component Object Model] ports to use those products effectively," Caneja explains.

Modular design boosts security. Caneja and his colleagues anticipate additional security benefits stemming from the modularity of

both Windows Server 2008 and IIS 7.0. "With the Windows Server 2008 server core, we can bring up a new hosting server that runs only those services required to perform the file server or domain controller roles needed for the customer or customers whose sites will be hosted on that server," he notes.

Also, IIS 7.0 supports deployment of a lightweight core and only those feature modules necessary for a given application. "In both cases, Applied Innovations and the hosting customer enjoy a dramatically reduced attack surface area as well as a smaller server footprint," Caneja adds.

Lower TCO, hardware savings, higher

utilization. A smaller server footprint is also more readily available to Applied Innovations and its customers with the enhanced virtualization capabilities of Windows Server 2008. For Coburn, these capabilities represent a major step forward. "We anticipate being able to put dozens of virtual machines on a single server, providing each customer a full platform, with full access, for less than half what it used to cost us," he says. "We also anticipate coming very close to 100 percent server utilization, an attractive goal in terms of reducing energy usage and 'going green'."

Native PHP support gives versatility and

performance. Another advantage of the company's move to Windows Server 2008 with IIS 7.0 is the native PHP support available in IIS 7.0. "This means that both ASP.NET and PHP applications will run in the Windows environment with greater performance and stability than before," Caneja points out. "This gives Applied Innovations and its customers the versatility to use whatever application—be it ASP, ASP.NET, or PHP—best fits their needs."

Similarly, the company's customer support portal is running faster since the company ported it to IIS 7.0. "By executing PHP requests with the FastCGI module, we anticipate query delivery at least twice as fast as before," Caneja says. "Considering that this solution encompasses our corporate knowledge base, ticketing, and live chat, this will help technicians to better support customers—our highest priority as a hosting provider."

Partnership drives innovation, and vice

versa. While the ability of Applied Innovations to support more sites per server can be traced directly to the enhanced modularity and virtualization capabilities available through Windows Server 2008 and IIS 7.0, this ability also can be considered part of a larger story of a company, its partnership with Microsoft, and its enthusiasm for the evolving Windows platform.

"When we started the company, the big players were Sun, Linux, Netscape, and NCSA," Coburn points out. "Then Microsoft came out with Windows 2000, IIS, ASP, ASP.NET, and Windows Server 2003, which was a major release. But Windows Server 2008 is something altogether new, a Web operating system. For these reasons, Windows Server 2008 and IIS 7.0 will become the foundation of our business."