CASE STUDY

Condé Nast Digital

Java Application Server With Fast PHP-Java Front End

caucho reliable open source

CONDÉ NAST DIGITAL

Condé Nast Digital Improves Productivity While Saving Costs by Migrating to the Resin and Quercus Platform

"It sounds silly and over simplistic, but Resin just works! It is easy to install, it is easy to get started, it is easy to configure, it is easy to get into a cluster, it is easy to work with, it shows at every level that Caucho focused on the target of a compact, efficient, easy JEE engine and delivered."

Nathan Tableman, Sr. Manager of Development, Condé Nast Digital

Solution
Condé Nast Digitial Migrated to Resin and Quercus

Product
Resin Professional Application Server and Quercus PHP in Java

Industry
Digital Media

Country
USA

Summary

Condé Nast Digital delivers online content affiliated with Condé Nast Digital magazines as well as online-only content on sites such as Webmonkey.com and Wired.com. The company's sites are household names and serve large amounts of traffic each day. Many of the sites individually attract from hundreds of thousands to several million unique page views per month. Condé Nast Digital uses a number of technologies to deliver this content with applications written in Java and PHP.

Caucho provides Condé Nast Digital with the high-performance, cost-effective Resin Java application server that makes development and deployment fast and efficient. Condé Nast Digital also uses Caucho's Quercus PHP engine which provides close integration of PHP with Java and the ability to use open source PHP applications within a Java environment. By using Resin and Quercus, Condé Nast Digital reduced costs and improved performance of both their website and internal development processes.

Background

Condé Nast Digital manages the online presence for the content of Condé Nast Digital magazines such as Vogue and Wired. As one of the most successful publishing houses in the world, Condé Nast Digital has vast name recognition. Thus Condé Nast Digital is responsible for delivering content to a huge number of visitors each month measuring in the millions.

In 2007 Condé Nast Digital began to reevaluate their Java infrastructure to improve performance and reduce costs. Startup and deployment times to their previous Java container were excessive, often

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taking hours. While speeding up these processes was important, the Condé Nast Digital team also wanted an affordable solution that adhered to strict Java standards. As part of that evaluation, Condé Nast Digital approached Caucho to investigate Resin. Condé Nast Digital had PHP applications in addition to Java and upon learning of the Quercus PHP engine, decided to evaluate both products. By running PHP and Java side-by-side in the same container, Condé Nast Digital could potentially reduce complexity and add capabilities by integrating the two technologies.

Evaluation Process

➲ Resin

The engineers of Condé Nast Digital first evaluated Resin for its ability to run JavaEE applications and were immediately impressed with the speed and developer-friendliness of the application server. With their previous "enterprise-grade" server, they experienced startup times of up to 4 hours and deployment times of 90 minutes for applications. These delays made development and debugging difficult and time consuming. With Resin, they were able to start the server and deploy within minutes and even seconds for certain applications, leading to a useful development feedback loop and a reduction in wait time. Originally the Condé Nast Digital engineers were planning to use many more Resin instances to match their existing infrastructure size, but were able to reduce the amount of maintained hardware due to Resin's efficiency.

"We had originally planned to run far more cluster nodes of Resin, but they weren't needed since we're able to handle considerable load and traffic spikes with meager CPU utilization."

Paul T. Fisher
Manager of Technology, Wired.com
Condé Nast Digital

➲ Quercus

Next, Condé Nast Digital engineers evaluated Quercus to run the open source applications MediaWiki and WordPress for Webmonkey.com. Although they faced some initial problems, Caucho engineers provided quick support including emails, phone support, and snapshot releases to resolve the issues. Once the PHP applications were deployed, Condé Nast Digital engineers found their performance to be up to 5 times faster than their previous experience with PHP. Quercus provides automatic pooling of database connections, which improved efficiency in the database layer for these applications.

Benefits from Resin and Quercus

Faster Performance	**Resin**: Startup and deployment times reduced by an order of magnitude. Hardware requirements dropped dramatically. **Quercus**: Up to 5 times faster than C implementation of PHP. Reduced wait times for users.
Excellent Support	Phone and email support provided within the business day, often within minutes. Snapshot releases with bug fixes provided, often within the day.
Greater Site Stability	Resin's deployment speed and adherence to standards allowed faster, more responsive development cycles.
Improved Productivity	Resin's fast site development and production efficiency afforded less machine and lower software cost for better performance.
Cost Savings	Infrastructure costs reduced by almost half due to lower licensing costs and reduced hardware needs.

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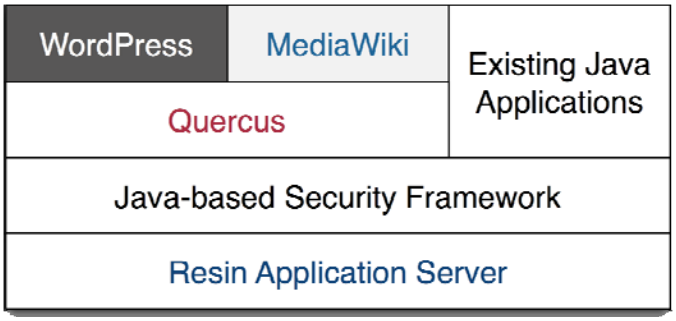
Findings



➲ In Deployment

Within 10 months of deployment, Condé Nast Digital noticed a drastic decrease in site-related issues under the new Resin or Quercus platform prompting the decision to migrate almost all of their applications to these new platforms. WordPress on Quercus now powers additional blogging sites within the organization including Vogue.com and Style.com blogs. Before switching to Resin and Quercus, Condé Nast Digital had a pre-existing custom Java security module that was used in all of its applications. Quercus' unique Java-PHP integration allowed the engineers to use the same module within the open source PHP applications directly with low overhead. Because Quercus is integrated into the Java container using standard Java EE APIs, Condé Nast Digital was also able to use open source Java libraries such as Spring and Hibernate with PHP applications.

"Resin drastically simplified our development"

Yujin Kim
Software Engineer
Condé Nast Digital

➲ Support

Caucho has provided Condé Nast Digital engineers with support directly from the developers who wrote the code for both Resin and Quercus. The support team responds within the day, often within minutes of the request via both email and phone. Because these support personnel also write the code, they are able to produce snapshot releases for critical issues quickly, many times within the same day of the request.

"I can't say enough positive things about Caucho. I have never worked with a company that provides the level of support that they do. When we've emailed a question, we've received a phone call or email response in minutes."

Paul T. Fisher
Manager of Technology, Wired.com
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About Caucho Technology, Inc.

Caucho Technology is an industry leading open source Java ISV with ten years of proven market success and over 340,000 commercial deployments including Salesforce and CNet. Caucho is a Sun Microsystems Java EE licensee whose products include Resin application server, Quercus Java-PHP performance solutions and Java Context and Dependency Injection. Caucho Technology was founded in 1998 and is based in La Jolla, California.

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