



CHALLENGE

Redevelop an older desktop application to improve adoption, reduce infrastructure resources and related costs and standardize on one version for ongoing support

SOLUTION

Use the CloudBees PaaS to accelerate application development and provide for ongoing application lifecycle management, while leveraging the benefits of the cloud

RESULTS

- >> New projects started in minutes
- >> Operating expenses reduced up to 30%
- >> Instant extensibility via the CloudBees Partner Ecosystem
- >> Customer support time reduced about 90%

SERVICES

- >> DEV@cloud
- >> JFrog
- >> Sauce Labs

VX Company Looks to the Cloud to Give Back to AIDS Victims on the Ground in Africa

When VX Company (VX), based in Baarn, The Netherlands, first turned their attention to stamping out AIDS in Africa, they never dreamed they would look up to the cloud in order to help thousands of people in Africa, back down on the ground.

Bas van Oudenaarde, technical manager, Enterprise Open Source Services group, explained the commitment VX has to giving back, “VX supports several charitable causes. One significant project is an application developed for Soweto Care System (SCS) in Africa. The Soweto application is a Java-based, Grails application. VX personnel developed the software for SCS and it is currently in use in about 90 different non-governmental organizations (NGOs), all focused on AIDS-related programs.” SCS uses the Soweto application to monitor patients and caregivers, as well as maintain records of home visits.

VX employs 300 technology professionals providing IT services to customers around the globe. VX focuses on software development, infrastructure services, software testing services and project management. All of those skills were tapped for the Soweto project.

Challenge

Soweto was originally developed as a PC-based, desktop application. “Though the software was well accepted, implementation quality varied widely—some NGOs didn’t have in-house IT staff to support the computing infrastructure,” explained Bas. “As a result, many NGOs remained on older versions, not taking advantage of ongoing software enhancements. Additionally, theft and PC viruses were rampant, which also made it challenging for some NGOs to even use the application. Finally, having many older versions installed made on-going support a challenge for VX to provide.”

VX redeveloped and enhanced Soweto, using Jenkins Continuous Integration server to manage the development environment. They offered Soweto as a Software as a Service (SaaS), hosted by VX on-premise, in their software factory. Later, using the CloudBees Platform as a Service (PaaS), Soweto was turned into a cloud-based SaaS. Today, users access the software in a multi-tenant, hosted environment over the web. NGOs can more easily utilize Soweto, as they don’t have to have IT support resources to maintain the computing environment and perform manual upgrades to new releases. At the same time, VX can mobilize support and development resources around one version of the software.

After redeveloping the Soweto application as a SaaS, VX originally hosted it, on-premise. “Around this time, VX realized the power, flexibility and ease-of-use the cloud could potentially offer to us,” explained Bas. “It was a realization that hit at the right time, as our software factory was overloaded, particularly when trying to support peak customer demands.” VX had to make ongoing investments in additional hardware and software to support Soweto, something that was turning into an annual occurrence. “In those days, Jenkins was the central hub in our software factory,” said Bas. “We had a variety of build jobs defined, such as continuous integration, regressions, quality builds and deploy builds for different environments.”

“We have eliminated the ongoing infrastructure investments as well as the associated maintenance and operational costs. We now operate within an environment managed by specialists who really know the ins and outs of their services. That frees us up to focus on what we do best: develop high quality software.”

>> Erik Zeillemaker,
Business Unit Manager

Learn More About VX
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Solution

Bas learned about the CloudBees PaaS and started playing around with it. Recognizing the power of the development services offered within the CloudBees Platform, he redesigned the software factory at VX. In just a couple of months, he had built it up with cloud components. This time the CloudBees Platform—offering Jenkins in the cloud—was the central hub.

For the Soweto project, VX used CloudBees DEV@cloud™ services for continuous integration development and RUN@cloud™ runtime services for the test environment. “VX found the CloudBees Platform to be very powerful and very flexible for development,” said Bas. “We were up and running quickly—in minutes—and able to control the complete application lifecycle.”

The SCS implementation team, located in South Africa, was able to easily collaborate with the VX development and support teams in The Netherlands, via the CloudBees Platform.

After the Soweto project, VX continued to use CloudBees for new projects. “Each successive project proved consistently fast in the setup of the project environment. Further, as we get into development and testing, if we need more capacity—thanks to the elasticity offered by the CloudBees PaaS—it is automatically there,” Bas explained.

Results

- >> **New projects started in minutes.** “The CloudBees Platform is very easy to use. New projects are up and running in minutes. We just won a really big Android project for a Canadian company. We were playing around for about 30 minutes and already had something to show on the CloudBees Platform! We used to spend about two weeks setting up the environment for a new project—procuring and provisioning hardware and other infrastructure resources. Then there was still the ongoing infrastructure maintenance to deal with, too.”
- >> **Operating expenses reduced up to 30% and productivity enhanced.** “Today our software factory is based on cloud services. We now try to only use PaaS and SaaS services. We have eliminated ongoing infrastructure investments, lowering our associated maintenance and operational costs by up to 30%. We operate within a well-maintained environment—an environment managed by specialists who really know the ins and outs of their services. That has provided us the ability to focus on what we do best: develop high quality software.”
- >> **Instant extensibility via the CloudBees Partner Ecosystem.** “We were able to tap into integrated services from Sauce Labs and JFrog,” explained Bas. “Running our Selenium tests within the CloudBees environment is very easy. With Artifactory, we have really powerful capabilities for managing software libraries. The best part: ease of access—in just a few clicks the integrated services were available to us, all from within the CloudBees environment.”
- >> **Customer support time reduced about 90%.** “With the cloud development and delivery model, the number of customers dealing with implementation maintenance and support issues is lessening,” said Bas. “As the NGOs migrate off desktop versions to the SaaS-based cloud versions, implementation and support resource time required of VX has dropped about 90%. The users migrating to the SaaS version can now be easily supported locally.”