



Leading Hosting Provider Rolls Out Next-Generation Services for Web Developers

Overview

Country: United States

Industry: Hosting Service Provider

Customer Profile

Verio Inc. a wholly owned subsidiary of NTT Communications Corporation, offers a broad range of Internet Protocol services including Web hosting, network services, and managed service offerings.

Business Situation

Web developers are looking for hosting services that support Microsoft® ASP.NET and the latest Web technologies. For Verio, this demand represents a significant business opportunity.

Solution

In addition to its five ViaVerio-based retail plans, Verio's small to medium enterprise hosting unit is offering developers and reseller partners access to six distinct shared hosting service offerings built on ASP.NET.

Benefits

- Uptime >99.9 percent
- Nearly twice as many websites per server
- Developer productivity increase 2-3X
- Cost-effective developer solution
- Expanded developer options
- Reduced operating costs

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Eric Carsrud, Manager, Windows Systems Administration, Verio

Microsoft® ASP.NET is helping Verio deliver a new set of high-performance yet cost-effective hosting services aimed at providing the developer and reseller communities with key technologies and capabilities that enable them to deliver highly dynamic websites, Web applications, and Web services for their customers. ASP.NET helps Web developers build more complex websites and Web-enabled applications two to three times faster than ever before. At the same time, Microsoft Windows Server™ 2003 is helping Verio provide a shared hosting platform with higher performance and uptime (99.9+ percent) as well as better economics with almost twice the number of websites on each server. For Verio and its customers, this means increased opportunities, decreased costs, and increased profits.

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Situation

As a leader in the delivery of shared hosting services, Verio’s Small to Medium Enterprise (SME) Hosting group understands the needs of Web developers, the trends in Web hosting and site design, and the technologies that best support both. One of these trends is toward increasingly complex and highly dynamic Web pages. The businesses that Web developers are supporting are demanding more and more from their websites, so developers are striving to build ever more sophisticated Web applications and Web services that other applications can consume. The demand for dynamic websites is increasing, while the demand for static sites is staying flat.

Because hosting is a core component of Verio’s business, the questions for Verio executives were clear: How best to support developers who want to build complex websites quickly and cost effectively? How best to build out a service that Verio can offer cost effectively? The answer to each question proved to be the same: Offer a new developer-oriented service built on the Microsoft® Windows Server™ 2003 operating system using Microsoft ASP.NET, a set of technologies in the Microsoft .NET Framework for building Web applications and Web services.

Such a service would meet developers’ needs for a fast and cost-effective way to build the dynamic sites and services that they want to be able to offer their customers. It would also make it possible for Verio to deliver a shared hosting service with a 99.9 percent service level agreement at a low cost.

Solution

Verio worked closely with Microsoft to deploy six distinct shared hosting offerings built around Microsoft ASP.NET. All of the services provide database support from Microsoft Access; in addition, three of the services

provide database support from Microsoft SQL Server™ 2000, part of Windows Server System™ integrated server software. Further breakdowns differentiate the services in terms of storage space, monthly transfer volumes, and other criteria. All the services run on dual-processor Intel Xeon-based servers, and all provide developers with access to the key tools and technologies that the developer community desires for working with ASP.NET, including ASP.NET Web Matrix and the ASP.NET Starter Kits.

Benefits

ASP.NET provides Verio and its customers with compelling benefits. The Microsoft .NET Framework and its ASP.NET enhancements help to increase server performance while lowering operating costs. In conjunction with Windows Server System, ASP.NET helps to improve server reliability and availability, which increases uptime and customer satisfaction. The ASP.NET hosting initiative also enables Verio to coordinate with Microsoft on go-to-market events that help increase demand for ASP.NET hosting services, such as ongoing training programs for Verio SME resellers, including Verio-sponsored .NET Developer seminars.

Performance Improvements for Operational Excellence

ASP.NET-based applications are proving to be faster and more responsive than applications written in Active Server Pages (ASP), a direct benefit for developers and their customers. ASP.NET compiles code for execution; it also detects changes and recompiles code automatically. The result is often a three- to five-fold improvement when a classic ASP-based application moves to ASP.NET.

Optimized output caching also helps ASP.NET improve performance. ASP.NET can execute a page just once and retain that page in memory for quick access. And with its use of fault-tolerant application pools, which isolate sets

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of processes on the server, ASP.NET can keep proven code safe from code that remains unproven. If one developer’s code fails in one application pool, the other application pools on the server remain unaffected.

For Verio, these performance improvements have been key. Verio has been able to host nearly twice as many websites on a shared server as it could under earlier versions of Internet Information Services (IIS). This is nearly doubling the average revenue per server and reducing operations costs by nearly half. Most importantly, the enhancements delivered by ASP.NET and IIS 6.0 have increased website performance and uptime for customers and made it possible for Verio to offer developers a set of low-cost, high-value shared hosting plans with a 99.9 percent uptime guarantee.

“IIS 6.0 is bullet-proof,” says William Toll, Product Manager for Windows Shared Web Hosting at Verio. “The platform is more stable than ever and so well designed that we’ve nearly doubled the number of sites we can host per server—yet we’ve increased reliability, security, and performance, too. That’s good for us, but it’s also very attractive to resellers, Web developers, and designers.”

Indeed, Verio’s SME hosting group has signed up dozens of new developers in the first six weeks after the introduction of its six new low-cost ASP.NET-based service offerings.

Enhanced Site Creation Capabilities to Meet Customer Needs

While ASP.NET enables developers to run customer sites efficiently and effectively in a shared hosting environment, it also makes it much easier for those same developers to build the sites quickly and cost effectively—even complex three-tiered sites that involve on-the-fly page presentation and multiple database lookups.

“Out of the box, ASP.NET comes with about 4,500 components built in,” says Eric Carsrud, Manager of Windows Systems Administration for Verio’s SME unit, “and they’re very easy to access. ASP.NET Web Matrix and [Microsoft] Visual Studio® .NET basically allow you to do drag-and-drop programming. Developers can add functionality to their applications at a record pace—and much of it is functionality that they used to shy away from offering to their customers because of the amount of time they would have to invest in developing it. With ASP.NET, the Microsoft .NET Framework, and tools like ASP.NET Web Matrix, the end product is a lot richer, a lot more functional than any static website or even a website with plug-ins.”

For Verio, this powerful functionality means that the hosting company can make an attractive offer to developers. “We were hearing that developers could build websites two to three times as quickly as they could on other platforms,” says Toll, “and we’re certainly hearing about those kinds of improvements from our clients. Moreover, our clients’ clients are much more satisfied because the websites have modern functionality and build a value that wasn’t there before. As a result, we’re seeing a doubling of accounts that take full advantage of ASP.NET and SQL Server.”

ASP.NET hosting also means more opportunities for upselling developer-oriented services. Developers new to ASP.NET who are exploring the development capabilities of the ASP.NET Web Matrix will eventually find that they can deliver even more functionality faster by moving up to Visual Studio .NET development system. Similarly, developers who start a customer site using a Microsoft Access or SQL Server Desktop database can move a customer over to Verio’s shared SQL Server offering as site growth warrants. ASP.NET hosting makes it easy to offer the appropriate

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solution to all participants—and to evolve those solutions as the participants' needs evolve.

“ASP.NET and Web services put us in a good position to enable developers to build advanced smart client applications,” says Toll. “Our customers can actually use their hosted sites to host services and deploy applications for their customers. It goes far beyond what they could do using a traditional hosted website.”

New Best-of-Breed Hosting Platform

Providing an ASP.NET hosting service really helps Verio's SME hosting business to shape an offering that is geared to meet the needs of developers who want to build forward-looking Windows®-based solutions. Not only can they get new developers onboard by offering an inexpensive ASP.NET service, but they also can provide those developers with all the tools they need to get moving rapidly.

The ASP.NET Web Matrix development environment and the ASP.NET Commerce Starter Kit are available through Verio at no charge. These tools give developers insight into the workings of ASP.NET, including working sample code that developers can quickly and easily customize to make their own. Verio also is working closely with Microsoft to offer developer training seminars, which help developers polish their ASP.NET development skills even more.

“The .NET Developer training seminar is a brilliant move on Microsoft's part,” says Toll. “Microsoft is assisting with funds and coordination to conduct a .NET training seminar for our own customers, and our reseller developer channel manager is absolutely delighted about this opportunity. That says a lot about Microsoft's commitment not only to its traditional base but also to new customers looking for new opportunities.”

For Verio, this combination of a powerful ASP.NET hosting environment and the strong commitment Microsoft has to hosters and developers promises to do great things for both the business and the industry.

“With ASP.NET and Windows Server 2003, Microsoft has created a new best-of-breed hosting platform,” says Carsrud. “That's exciting for us here at Verio, because it's not hosting as we knew it before, with simple static Web pages or e-commerce or other pre-defined functions.. This is the Web-enablement of applications, and it's what the future of the Web is all about.”

For More Information

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For more information about Verio products and services, call (800) 438-8374 or visit the website at: www.verio.com

Microsoft Windows Server System and the Communications Sector

Microsoft Windows Server System is a comprehensive, integrated, and interoperable server infrastructure that helps reduce the complexity and costs of building, deploying, connecting, and operating agile business solutions. Windows Server System helps service providers create new value for their businesses and their customers through the strategic use of IT assets. With the Windows Server operating system as its foundation, Windows Server System delivers dependable infrastructure for data management and analysis; enterprise integration; customer, partner, and employee portals; business process automation; communications and collaboration; and core IT operations including security, deployment, and system management.

For more information about Windows Server System, go to: www.microsoft.com/windowsserversystem

For more information about Microsoft solutions for the communications sector, go to: www.microsoft.com/serviceproviders

Software and Services

- Products
 - Microsoft SQL Server 2000
 - Microsoft Visual Studio .NET 2003
 - Microsoft Windows Server 2003, Standard Edition

- Technologies
 - Microsoft ASP.NET
 - Microsoft Internet Information Services

Hardware

- Intel 2300 servers

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