

# People's Group



*People's Group*  
Nurturing Humanity through Health  
& Educational Excellence



*"Red Hat solutions have helped us to build an ideal infrastructure platform for tomorrow, taking our business to the next level. Our dependency on these solutions has grown so much that we can't even think of working without them."*

*Atul Kashyap,  
Sr. General Manager - IT*

## CASE HIGHLIGHTS

**Solution:** Postfix Mailing Solution on RHEL  
MS Windows to RHEL Migration



# PEOPLE'S GROUP POWERS ITS CRITICAL MAILING AND INFRASTRUCTURE SYSTEMS ON RED HAT ENTERPRISE LINUX

## FAST FACTS

Customer	People's Group
Industry	Conglomerate (Education and Healthcare, Media & Entertainment, and Real Estate).
Geography	Pan India
Red Hat Partner	Keen + Able Computers Private Limited
Business challenge	To design a centralized, secure, controllable, stable, and high-performing mailing solution and other infrastructure solutions that are cost effective to co-exist with the existing infrastructure so as to build an effective communication tool within the departments and among the students, agencies and the external world.
Solution	People's Group chose Red Hat Enterprise Linux, along with other open source systems, to implement its mailing, firewall, proxy, DNS, and other solutions such as Mass SMS solutions, Bandwidth sharing/ Load balancing, backup and failover solutions, and antivirus and filter applications.
Software	Red Hat Enterprise Linux and other supported open source components, including Postfix MTA, Apache Web Server, MySQL Database Server, Squid Proxy Server, Bind DNS Server, iptables.
Hardware	Intel Xeon processor-based servers from HP, HCL, Wipro.
Benefits	Reduced IT costs, simplified Management, easy systems maintenance, increased scalability and performance, better productivity, reduced redundancy, higher efficiency and security, and no dependency on other third party vendors.



## BACKGROUND

People's Group is situated in the city of Bhopal, capital of the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh. It is a multi-faced group having a charitable trust called Sarvajanic Jankalyan Parmarthik Nyas and other companies. Its campus is spread over 300 acres of land and is the largest for education and career building in central India. Its journey began with an objective of "Nurturing Humanity through health and educational and Media excellence." The campus has seven hospitals and 17 academic institutions under its umbrella. The Group looks forward to having its own University in future.

The Trust at People's Group provides free medical services and treatment, including the surgical procedures and diagnostic testing, food, and ambulance services to the poor and needy. The Trust also gives donations to various charitable organizations, including government organizations.

People's Group entered into Print media with launching of its daily Hindi newspaper by the name of "Peoples Samachar" with its editions from Bhopal, Indore, Gwalior, Jabalpur and future editions are planned from Raipur, New Delhi and Mumbai. The group has a fortnightly magazine by the name of "People's Post" from Delhi.

## BUSINESS CHALLENGE

For the first two years since its inception in 2002, People's Group was totally focused on the education and healthcare sectors. With a firm footing in these two sectors the group planned to expand its diversify. This expansion was two-pronged; one was to build more educational institutes and hospitals, and the second was to diversify in other industry sectors, such as publishing and print media, entertainment (malls, multiplex, and other commercial ventures), hotel industry and construction. A fast pace of growth made it imperative for the organization to leverage IT in a strategic way that can enable business growth.

"Until 2006, IT was not at all a focus area for us," said Atul Kashyap, senior general manager, IT & Communication, People's Group. "The scorching fast pace of growth meant that IT set-up can no longer be in an ad hoc manner," he added. Then it was under the dynamic leadership of group's director (HR & IT) capt. Ruchi Vijaywargia that the IT scenario started to make a progressive change. With her guidance, the organization's IT team started to revamp and standardize the entire IT infrastructure and its operations beginning with the messaging and communication solution. "All over the campus, in the educational institutions and hospitals, the IT setup had increased tremendously in a haphazard fashion. The usage of internet and email was totally ad hoc, uncontrolled, unsystematic, and decentralized," said Kashyap.

People's Group needed to control and audit web and email access as this was the main source of communication with the internal as well as external world. It also needed to ensure that the internet availability all the time with almost zero downtime. "Our priority was to provide IT services and configure/build our strong viable network through various channels/medium so in-spite of link failures the connectivity was through multiple links." said Kashyap. As a mission critical system, any system downtime reflects on the reputation of the company, and in turn its profitability. It led to various issues due to which the IT & Communication team planned to migrate to the newer solutions.

A major interest for the IT team was to correct the decentralized nature of the internet facility and to control the usage of the Internet and email services. Previously, the IT team had to depend on the services of multiple ISPs leading to redundancy and over-management. Secondly, there

was a lack of a control and auditing mechanism in place for web and email access, in addition to the standardization of email addresses. At the time, students and employees were using their personal email addresses to send and receive official emails. People's Group wanted to setup an in-house mail server for unified communication providing official email IDs to the users. Lastly, the IT team wanted to ensure that the internet would be available in spite of a possible link failure. Overall, they wanted to have a reliable world class solution with a flexibility to customize as per our own requirements, solution which was economical.

With these issues in front of them, the People's Group IT & Communication team initiated the process of evaluating various options to manage and provide e-mail facility, as well as other infrastructure components, such as proxy server, DNS server, SMS server and firewall.

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*"Red Hat solutions have helped us to build an ideal infrastructure platform for tomorrow, taking our business to the next level. Today we have complete peace of mind as its has brought stability, higher performance, economics gains apart from cost savings and an ability to scale to keep pace with our rapid growth. Our dependency on these solutions has grown so much that we can't even think of working without them."*

- Atul Kashyap, senior general manager,  
Information Technology & Communication,  
People's Group

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## SOLUTION

With the criteria of reliability, scalability, security, cost-effectiveness, and performance in mind, the People's Group IT & Communication team chose the world leader in open source system, Red Hat, as its trusted technology partner, and decided to build its messaging and other infrastructure solution based on open source software. Red Hat's open source solutions were an ideal fit as they not only met these criteria, but also allowed People's Group to avoid proprietary lock-in and build its IT infrastructure on commodity hardware.

"We chose Red Hat because we wanted to build a robust, secure, and stable solution in a cost-effective manner," said Kashyap. "Additionally, the proof of concept completed using Red Hat Enterprise Linux was extremely successful, which gave us the necessary confidence to opt for Red Hat." The Red Hat Enterprise Linux solution was also recommended by the People's Group's IT implementation vendor Keen & Able Computers Pvt. Ltd. "Adopting Red Hat also didn't require us to invest on having high end costly servers to implement all these solutions at our end," said Kashyap. "The solutions are extremely secured and scalable, making them appropriate for People's Group," said Varad Gupta, chief technology officer, Keen & Able Computers Pvt. Ltd.

The implementation was done in a planned and phased manner beginning with two mail servers and then serially implementing proxy server, firewall, and the DNS server, and the SMS server. People's Group built the open source mailing solution using Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5 along with Postfix, Apache web server, and MySQL. The proxy server used was the open source Squid proxy server for security and access control, while the global DNS server was Bind DNS server for more than 50 sub-domains. The IT & Communication team implemented iptables for setting up the firewall. With such standardized systems and centralized server management, the IT team could reduce the redundancy of multiple Internet lines and dependency on various ISPs.

The implementation of the mailing solution on Red Hat Enterprise Linux was smooth and rapid. Currently, the system is running in the cluster of two servers, one mail store server, and another back-end server for its anti-spam and anti-virus system. More than 500 authorized users are

utilizing the solution on a day-to-day basis on a database the size of about 60 GB. "The performance of the system is exceptional. More than 2,000 emails are sent through the system every minute as compared to just about 100 emails that were sent before the implementation of this system," said Kashyap. Since that time, the system has been fully operational, we have not faced any kind of unplanned downtime. "We received excellent support from Red Hat's partner, Keen & Able Computers, during all the phases of the solution, including development, implementation, and support."

With a successful implementation of the mailing solution on Red Hat Enterprise Linux in its educational and hospital set-up, People's Group is planning to have an additional mailing solution for its media and hotel industry set-up in the near future. It is also evaluating a Linux-based anti-spam and anti-virus solution as an additional barrier, which can effectively filter the spam that goes out of the system and improve the quality of email.

## BENEFITS

"The solution is efficient, secured, and centralized mailing solution," said Kashyap. "The solution has also helped us to monitor the Internet and mail usage, understand the usage pattern, and implement the mail and Internet policy effectively."

Red Hat solutions also provided People's Group with lower IT costs, simplified management, reduced systems maintenance, and increased scalability and performance. In addition, the solution has improved the overall productivity of employees, as well as the end user. "The efficient and reliable electronic communication mode helped us in communicating with each other in a faster way," said Kashyap. The centralized solution has also reduced the redundancy by eliminating the need to have multiple servers and improved the uptime of the system. "The system downtime is almost negligible and the cost of maintaining multiple backup servers has come down and we are able to provide an uninterrupted service," said Kashyap. "In financial terms, due to reduction in infrastructure and its associated maintenance costs, it has translated to huge cost savings for the group."



In summary, Red Hat provided People's Group with enterprise-class platform for its mailing and infrastructure solution at an affordable price without any compromise on performance and scalability. "Red Hat solutions have helped us to build an ideal infrastructure platform for tomorrow taking our business to the next level. Our dependency on these solutions has grown so much that we can't even think of working without them," said Kashyap.

#### ABOUT KEEN & ABLE COMPUTERS

Keen & Able Computers Pvt Ltd is an Open Source Systems Integration (SI) organisation and a Red Hat Advanced Business Partner. Along with its Open Source training, education and research wing – FOSTERING Linux – Keen & Able is uniquely positioned to deliver RHEL/RHEV and JBoss-based products, trainings, and customised solution offerings. We strongly believe that our greatest strength lies in understanding a customer's requirements first, and then building on the huge pool of Open Source solutions to cater to those requirements.