

# HP ProLiant DL380 Packaged Cluster and SteelEye LifeKeeper for Oracle solution keeps the mail moving

Deutsche Post Direkt GmbH



"Deutsche Post Direkt is able to generate additional revenue that it couldn't realize without the HP ProLiant and SteelEye LifeKeeper for Oracle solution, which provides a great return on our IT investment."

– Data Center Team Leader Michael Rösgen, Deutsche Post Direkt GmbH

Deutsche Post Direkt is one of the leading providers of solutions for address and document management in Germany. The direct mail industry thrives on speed, quality, and high service levels. While the market may offer addresses that lead to mailing return ratios in the 10 to 20 percent range, Deutsche Post Direkt offers services that lower a customer's mailing return ratios to single digits. To maximize the use of its all-important address referential file residing in an Oracle database, the company wanted to introduce a 24x7, fail-proof process scheduling environment, which would automate the company's most critical IT processes. By centralizing workflow control, Deutsche Post Direkt would be able to deliver dependable output anytime. Consequently, the company needed to implement a low-cost, easy-to-scale, high-availability IT solution.

Having enjoyed a mutually beneficial relationship over the past three years, technology partners HP and SteelEye Technology were ready to meet Deutsche Post Direkt's critical business needs.

## Delivering the goods: redundancy, failover, scalability

At a local technology show demonstration of the HP ProLiant Cluster HA/L100 running SteelEye LifeKeeper for Oracle, Deutsche Post Direkt's Data Center Team Leader Michael Rösgen was impressed with the performance, resilience, and failover of the joint solution. "The HP ProLiant DL380 Packaged Cluster appealed to us because it is undoubtedly the simplest and most affordable cluster platform available today. It met and exceeded our needs for redundancy, hot-plug features, and engineering quality."

Deutsche Post Direkt previously identified a number of critical business processes that should not be interrupted. Any resulting downtime would impact productivity, recovery efforts, service fulfillment, customer retention, and the company's reputation for reliability. The company met the critical need for continuous availability and fail-safe operability of its process scheduling environment with the ProLiant DL380 Packaged Cluster, which includes two ProLiant DL380 server nodes and a SmartArray Cluster Storage system. At Deutsche Post Direkt, one node operates a half-terabyte Oracle database, and the other functions as a file server. If one node fails or needs to be taken offline for maintenance, the surviving node will run the Oracle application until the primary server is brought back into the cluster. "Everyone relies on having an available data base and file server in operation," Rösgen notes. "Now, no one questions whether the database is online at a given moment, because everything runs fabulously."





### **Bolstering availability and protecting all components – affordably**

Rösgen considered several clustering products, but he didn't believe those products were technically sound and economically feasible. Initially, he was intrigued with SteelEye LifeKeeper for Oracle<sup>9i</sup> recovery solution because the software was running on a configuration similar to the one in Deutsche Post Direkt's data center.

"As a certified software vendor, SteelEye is so knowledgeable about clustering that we were convinced LifeKeeper for Oracle would work in our environment," explains Rösgen. "In our search for the right clustering software, we found many products on the market, but most of them had functional gaps and drawbacks. We didn't find any negatives in the SteelEye LifeKeeper software."

Specifically, Deutsche Post Direkt's IT staff had established comprehensive requirements for failover, monitoring, and administration. SteelEye LifeKeeper met all of the staff's criteria. In addition, SteelEye's approach to clustering focuses on an application-centric view versus a components-oriented approach, which appealed to Rösgen and his colleagues. "SteelEye's application-centric approach led to our ultimate decision to use the LifeKeeper software," Rösgen explains. "The software monitors the entire application 'stack,' which is absolutely essential in maintaining high availability. We specified all dependencies and system elements on which we rely, and one single technology performs an intelligent failover of those components to prevent application failure. Once configured, the software is easy to maintain. As a result, our database administrator doesn't notice any difference in managing the clustered Oracle database versus a single instance database."

### **Targeting specialized expertise for quick results**

Computer Concept, an HP and SteelEye partner in Germany specializing in deploying high-availability solutions, installed the ProLiant Cluster HA/L100 configuration and LifeKeeper for Oracle software for optimum use at Deutsche Post Direkt. "As usual, the installation of the HP ProLiant servers went well," says Rösgen. "The unique, pre-integrated nature of the ProLiant DL380 Packaged Cluster made it easy and fast to deploy. During the configuration of the LifeKeeper software and Linux operating system, our Computer Concept consultant was great about giving us concise, valid answers to every one of our questions. We were impressed with Computer Concept's level of expertise and our consultant's strong experience with HP hardware and SteelEye software. Our solution operated fabulously."

Deutsche Post Direkt was so satisfied that after five months it commissioned Computer Concept to deploy a similar HP-SteelEye solution to protect a half-terabyte of data in its file services. "Together with the database, these clusters form the basis of a highly available process control system for data center automation purposes," Rösgen explains. "We've been able to eliminate the manual processes, inefficiency, and error potential that growth poses to the business."

With rock-solid HP ProLiant servers running Linux, industry-leading HP SmartArray shared storage, and SteelEye LifeKeeper's 10-year, enterprise-class pedigree, HP and SteelEye help customers realize the cost advantages of industry standards – without giving up their familiar UNIX-like operating environment. Customers like Deutsche Post Direkt discover they can gain competitive advantages without sacrificing stability or availability.

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## Challenge

- Fulfill service-level agreements and maintain outstanding mail rates
- Introduce a 24x7, fail-proof process scheduling environment that automates the company's most critical IT processes
- Reduce the time spent on business processes
- Implement a low-cost, easy-to-scale, high-availability IT solution

## Solution

### Hardware

- Two HP ProLiant DL380 Packaged Clusters, featuring SmartArray Cluster Storage
- Additional 30 ProLiant servers, including models DL380 and DL360

### Software

- HP ProLiant Cluster HA/L100 cluster kit
- SteelEye LifeKeeper for Oracle software
- SteelEye LifeKeeper for Linux
- Oracle9i database

### HP Services

- Extended hardware warranty

## Results

- Enables Deutsche Post Direkt to fulfill its service-level agreements and maintain outstanding mail rates, thus solidifying the company's dominance in the market
- Establishes the foundation for a data center automation infrastructure that speeds up operations, enhances quality, and saves money
- Radically reduces the time spent on critical business processes
- Provides the means to generate additional revenue
- Achieves redundancy, higher performance, and adaptability at a lower unit cost, compared to implementing additional Oracle databases and proprietary systems

Now accompanying Deutsche Post Direkt's reputation for offering fail-safe services is a failover database and the foundation for a data center automation infrastructure that speeds up operations, enhances quality, and saves money. Rösger concludes: "An always available database is the foundation to realizing our business goals. The HP-SteelEye solution enhanced our business processes such that we can now automate a number of complex business processes and deliver higher quality output with less effort and time. Manual tasks that used to take a week to accomplish currently require just two days. Because of this investment, we're able to generate additional revenue that we couldn't realize without the HP ProLiant-SteelEye LifeKeeper for Oracle solution."

#### **Company profile**

Deutsche Post Direkt GmbH ([www.postdirekt.de](http://www.postdirekt.de)), part of the direct marketing business division of Deutsche Post, offers an extensive service package for address purging, enhancement, and analysis of private addresses for direct marketing campaigns. The basis for these address comparisons is the company's postal reference file, which holds 95 million active and inactive addresses. Deutsche Post Direkt uses this reference file to identify undeliverable addresses and recognize duplicates quickly. For one address-related product, the company guarantees an address evaluation and correction in just two seconds. The company's services save production and mailing costs for customer direct marketing campaigns.



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