

Parallels® Virtuozzo Containers – Linux

Customer Success Story

Founded in 1996, Backcountry.com is an online retailer focused on core gear for the outdoor athlete. Backcountry sells only premium outdoor clothing and equipment from top brands such as The North Face, Oakley, Burton, Rossignol, Patagonia and more than 500 others.

Backcountry.com was founded by two childhood friends, Jim Holland and John Bresee, who were looking for a way to combine Internet retail and their love for backcountry skiing. Started with the \$2,000 that the two men could scrounge up between them, Backcountry.com merged passion for the outdoors with excellence and innovation online to ensure that adventure gear would go from “click” to the customer’s house every time, over and over again.

The majority of all applications are home-grown including: warehouse and conveyer code, customer service, procurement, returns, ERP and E-commerce. Before virtualization, the company relied on dedicated systems for each project. While it brought simplicity from an application development perspective, frequently one system was starved for resources while other systems were idle. CPU resources had become trapped and wasted resources.

Virtualization helps eliminate idle resources by allowing one system to look like many. The results have been so positive that the CIO has issued a directive that anything that can be virtualized – will be virtualized.

With so much in-house development, there is a tremendous dependency on the development teams. In the past, development and production environments were dissimilar resulting in transcription problems during deployment into production. Parallels Virtuozzo Containers is used to provide full replicas of the production stack, supplying development with multiple instances of the environment. When development is complete, QA uses the environment for test before deployment into production. Parallels templates are being used to define base systems and automate provisioning.

“Ideally everything will be automated,” says Leo Mata, IT Manager. “Our goal is to have real life QA environments that are functional for testing,” says Mata. Parallels Virtuozzo Containers lets the developer spin off a whole new environment rather than sharing one environment with everyone. “This way the developer can destroy one environment and deploy a new one without affecting the productivity of others,” says Mata.

For shared (legacy) situations, each developer has their own “camp” which consists of a full copy of the application code and a minimal application stack. “If a little piece of code goes bad, it does not go out and break everyone’s camp,” says Mata.

There are multiple reasons why Parallels Virtuozzo Containers stands out over the competition for development projects. “The whole concept of operating system virtualization on a kernel is super useful; it does not have all the bulk and overhead that you have with hypervisors,” says Mata.

Parallels Virtuozzo Containers provides Mata’s team with a pristine development environment that is very light weight, super performer and super easy to use. “We have better version control, tracking and it is an easy way to make sure every development environment has what it needs,” says Mata.



backcountry.com

Fast Facts:

- **Company:** Backcountry.com
- **Headquarters:** West Valley City & Park City, Utah
- **Number of employees:** 650+
- **Business:** E-tail, Outdoor Industry
- **Website:** www.backcountry.com

“Parallels Virtuozzo Containers lets the development team spin off new environments for specific projects. Having new environments available when needed is super awesome.”

— Leo Mata, IT Manager

“We are really happy with the java performance on PVC,” says Mata. “Hypervisors and JVM just don’t play well and there are a lot of constraints, especially in memory. Java processes are handled in the operating system with hypervisors and you are spinning cycles needlessly.”

Mata’s team develops application infrastructure known as middleware. “Everything the team needs for database and application stack development is there, it is really an ideal solution,” says Mata.

A critical component to Backcountry.com’s success is the company focus on outdoor sports. To establish business process controls without destroying the free spirit culture, Backcountry.com is working on automated policies that will trigger a chain reaction of scripts and actions. “The goal is to click a button, wait a few minutes, receive your environment, then click on a link to destroy,” says Mata.

Learn more at www.parallels.com/virtuozzo

“With Parallels Virtuozzo Containers, if a development environment goes haywire, that instance just dies.”

– Leo Mata, IT Manager

“Parallels Virtuozzo Containers’ java performance is a real strength for this particular virtualization platform.”

– Leo Mata, IT Manager