

SASSA cuts costs and improves service delivery in rural areas with Novell and Useful Multiplier

Date: 07-01-2009 12:03 PM CET

Category: [IT, New Media & Software](#)

Press release from: [Omni Technology Solutions](#)

25 June 2009 - Omni (omni-ts.com), its South African distributor, Lekgotla Technologies, and Novell South Africa today announced the successful implementation of Useful Multiplier™ desktops in 50 rural South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) offices. SASSA began with a 13-site pilot of the Linux Desktop virtualisation software running on SUSE Linux Enterprise Desktop® in August 2007 to reduce costs and improve turnaround times on social grant applications from rural offices. The project yielded initial cost savings of R250 000 (US\$31,000) per site and has transformed application processing from several weeks to the targeted 24 hours. Since being officially approved by SASSA, several South African provinces are looking to adopt this strategy to enhance service delivery and to address budget restraints and limited electrical and connectivity infrastructure in rural South Africa.

"Novell South Africa played an integral part in the process of helping Lekgotla Technologies and SASSA build a rural deployment roadmap," said Thomas Heubner, Director of Lekgotla Technologies and Omni Authorised Distributor in South Africa. "Useful Multiplier running on SUSE Linux Enterprise Desktop delivers the most cost-effective and energy-efficient desktop strategy for rural and urban SASSA offices. Using this Linux desktop virtualisation software, a single desktop computer can power up to 10 full-featured stations that require minimal electricity. Each desktop comes equipped with a MTN 3G modem that provides wireless access to the Social Pension System (SOCPEN) in Pretoria. SASSA officials are now able to capture and process social grant applications within 24 hours from rural areas. Based on the success of the 13-site pilot in Limpopo, Useful Multiplier has been deployed in additional rural SASSA offices in Mpumalanga, Limpopo and North West Province. We are actively working with SASSA leaders from other provinces with similar budget restraints and infrastructure challenges."

"SASSA is committed to administering social grants in a cost-effective and efficient manner," said Jabulani Makondo, head of SASSA IT Operations in Pretoria. "Useful Multiplier is dramatically improving our ability to process social grant applications from rural sites that are desperately lacking in IT infrastructure. Even urban SASSA sites faced with budget constraints are considering the viability of converting their stand-alone computers to multi-station Linux desktops using this cost-effective desktop model."

"Since deploying Useful Multiplier in 2007, the 39 test sites in our province have dramatically reduced hardware, software and infrastructure costs," said Solly Mokgohloa, senior SASSA ICT manager for the Limpopo Region. "Our first test site was GaMatlala, which is far enough from Polokwane to be remote, but still close enough to allow us to visit the site for support and follow-up purposes. The system set-up took 30 minutes and within 45 minutes we were online and processing grant applications. During the past two years, the office in GaMatlala has been in constant operation with almost no support or system problems. Tens of thousands of grants have been processed. The Useful Multiplier desktops have done what they are supposed to, they require very little maintenance, and they add value to our business. This next-generation desktop model delivers significant benefits to our customers and addresses the service delivery challenges in rural South Africa."

"Over 400,000 seats of Useful Multiplier have been sold in 100 countries," said Trevor Poapst, director of global marketing and business development for Omni. "The success of the Useful Multiplier pilot in Limpopo, Mpumalanga and the North West Province marks an important win for SASSA — and the millions of South Africans the government agency serves in these regions. The social impact of this government Linux desktop initiative will be significant for rural South Africa."

For more information on the SASSA project and Useful Multiplier, please contact Thomas Heubner at tom@omni-ts.com or call +27 11 326 0062.

About Omni Technology Solutions Inc.

Omni delivers a proven portfolio of integration, management, messaging and Linux desktop solutions for enterprise networks. Omni is the exclusive distributor of Useful Multiplier globally for SUSE Linux Enterprise Desktop and openSUSE from Novell. Lekgotla Technologies is Omni's software distributor in South Africa. www.omni-ts.com

About Novell

Novell, Inc. (Nasdaq: NOVL) delivers the best engineered, most interoperable Linux platform and a portfolio of integrated IT management software that helps customers around the world reduce cost, complexity and risk. With our infrastructure software and ecosystem of partnerships, Novell harmoniously integrates mixed IT environments, allowing people and technology to work as one. For more information, visit www.novell.com.

About Useful Multiplier

Useful Multiplier is the leading low-cost, high-performance Linux Desktop virtualization solution that turns 1 PC into ten. Useful Multiplier enables a single ordinary computer to support up to 10 independent users all at the same time, each with just their own monitor, keyboard, and mouse. With over 400,000 Linux workstations sold in over 100 countries, Useful Multiplier offers users the features of a full PC including high performance video and saves up to 80% on hardware costs, 70% on support and maintenance costs, and 90% on electricity use as compared to a traditional PC.

www.omni-ts.com/linux-desktop/

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