

## Platform Lab makes software evaluation simple for OCLC

### Computer library services cooperative uses off-site testing environment to quickly and affordably find the right software solution

Columbus, OH. 2007 -- Given the associated cost and complexity, internally performing software evaluations prior to purchase is something many companies either do very reluctantly or simply do not do at all. However, by discovering and using Platform Lab, OCLC Online Computer Library Center was able to test multiple software applications and determine the best fit for their purposes.

OCLC is a nonprofit, membership, computer library service and research organization dedicated to the public purposes of furthering access to the world's information and reducing information costs. More than 57,000 libraries in 112 countries and territories around the world have used OCLC services to locate, acquire, catalog, lend and preserve library materials. Researchers, students, faculty, scholars, professional librarians and other information seekers use OCLC services to obtain bibliographic, abstract and full-text information when and where they need it.

The particular challenge facing OCLC and project manager Dave Ungar was a quick need to evaluate, select and move forward with software critical to a specific project.

"We needed to quickly get hardware in place and evaluate different software from multiple vendors," said Ungar. "Platform Lab allowed us to streamline the test; providing and setting up the machines and administration for us so we didn't have to do that internally. We were able to test everything at once. They enabled us to get on with the work we really wanted to do without having to put in time dealing with all of the hardware and backend infrastructure involved."

With direct communication between Ungar and Platform Lab Director Steve Gruetter, the specifications were laid out and Platform Lab rapidly set up a testing environment of multiple HP Proliant ML370s equipped with: 2 x 3.4 GHz dual core Xeon processors; 144 GB of disk; 6 GB of RAM with Linux ES 4.0, 64 bit loaded, a Cisco 3560G Gigabit switch, and VPN access with dedicated bandwidth for the duration of the 6 week test.

Just like that, OCLC was ready to run.

Said Ungar, "They got the environment set up quickly; were responsive and provided answers to all our questions; and really just took away a lot of headaches."

"The OCLC engagement here at Platform Lab is a fine example of a smart organization making a smart choice by conducting a proof-of-concept evaluation off-site in an independent environment," said

Gruetter. "We truly enjoy helping professionals like Dave easily and affordably test for and discover their correct solution."

Ungar agreed, "Platform Lab's pricing structure made it a very easy decision to use them. Like Platform Lab, we're a non-profit organization; so cost is always a big concern. Beyond price, however, Steve is very conversant in all the technology and that was a big help in terms of time. He was able to work with very little direction, identify what we needed and give it to us. It was that simple; we had a need and Platform Lab quickly filled it."

And how about OCLC's satisfaction with the test itself? According to Ungar, "We compared different vendors and the experience helped us make our decision on which one to use. Simple as that and that was the benefit."