BMC Helix on Amazon Aurora delivers great TCO and faster access to innovations for customers

Case Study

Executive Summary

Migrating its Helix ITSM solution from SQL Server to Amazon Aurora helps BMC Software lower customer costs, deliver rapid product innovations and updates, and receive credible and reliable data management services for Amazon Aurora PostgreSQL directly from AWS engineers, all without degrading customer performance.

" The idea of having a company like Amazon Web Services stand behind an open source product and take care of important attributes like high availability, scaling, and overall data management is huge. "

— Raj Cheruvu
   AVP R&D, Helix ITSM at BMC

The Challenge

As a software vendor, BMC's cloud services are designed to work across different customer data environments. When BMC first built their on-premises ITSM solution, Remedy, over twenty years ago, most of their customers ran Oracle or Microsoft SQL Server database engines, so they built the solution using the common denominators between them.

Over time, BMC has looked for ways to innovate and provide more value for their customers by leveraging new technologies like containers and open source. Although Postgres has been a viable open source database option in terms of functionality, the management layer left a lot to be desired. Many BMC customers rely on their solutions to provide mission critical services; therefore, BMC has been reluctant to migrate to open source databases because doing so would require them to develop a comprehensive management layer for backup, HA/DR, scaling etc.

The Solution

Working with AWS solution architects and the AWS development team, BMC is migrating its Helix SaaS offering to Amazon Aurora. Running on Amazon Aurora offers the cost savings of open source along with the benefits of a fully managed database service including HA/DR, automatic backups, scaling, etc. With this new database solution in place to support their SaaS offering, BMC's Helix ITSM brings a new level of competition to the market.

About BMC

BMC delivers software, services, and expertise to more than 10,000 customers, including 92% of the Forbes Global 100. The company provides solutions in the areas of service management, automation, operations, and the mainframe that help customers meet escalating digital demands and maximize IT innovation.

The majority of BMC's ITSM install base runs on-premises today. Due to wide market adoption of cloud services, BMC is helping customers migrate to the SaaS model. By moving to SaaS, customers can access updates and new features more quickly, improve their workload performance and scale, and reduce their overall costs.

" Amazon Aurora provides the open source database management layer we've been looking for. "

— Raj Cheruvu
   AVP R&D, Helix ITSM at BMC

Results and Benefits

BMC Helix ITSM SaaS solution's support for Amazon Aurora has opened the door to innovation and improved data management for BMC while lowering costs for their customers.

Commercial-grade capabilities at open source costs

The open source compatible engine of Amazon Aurora has demonstrated performance levels on par with Microsoft SQL Server for BMC's standardized use cases. By moving their SaaS offering to Amazon Aurora, BMC can embrace the open source cost structure and leverage some of the latest database capabilities such as support for different data types using REST APIs and JSON stores.

Faster release cycles using DevOps CI/CD approach

BMC has been architecting and rebranding Remedy to be offered as a SaaS model, Helix ITSM, over the past two years by architecting it to run in containers. The final push to Amazon Aurora has allowed the development to fully adopt a CI/CD DevOps approach for application development which has shortened release times from 18 months (as on-premises software) to six months (with containers) all the way to quarterly. Now, minor changes can be pushed out within hours to help customers get updates and new capabilities in a fraction of the time it used to take on-premises.

Created new opportunities for product innovation

As part of the move to a microservices approach, BMC broke Helix into logical units separate from the application's core functionality. This permitted new opportunities for innovation that were impractical under the old method. For example, when a service ticket was opened, an email was sent to the service team. In Remedy, this task was integrated into the core application. On Helix, notifications are controlled by an independent service in the cloud, which means they can be changed (ex. adding the option of a text) without needing to open the core application.

Improved reporting using read-only replicas

Reporting services have run on a separate system in the past which meant the data lagged behind actual transactions. With Amazon Aurora, BMC plans to leverage the read-only replica to keep their reports better up to date.

Learn more

Amazon Aurora is a MySQL and PostgreSQL-compatible relational database built for the cloud, that combines the performance and availability of traditional enterprise databases with the simplicity and cost-effectiveness of open source databases. Amazon Aurora is up to five times faster than standard MySQL databases and three times faster than standard PostgreSQL databases. It provides the security, availability, and reliability of commercial databases at 1/10th the cost.