TuxCare
We Take Care of Linux

CASE STUDY

AppSignal Switches from Canonical to TuxCare for Live Patching with Fewer Reboots and Lower Costs

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Summary

After using Canonical's Livepatch, AppSignal switched to TuxCare's KernelCare Enterprise and LibCare add-on. Thanks to TuxCare, AppSignal no longer needs to reboot for vulnerability patching and can keep their servers continuously running – saving time and costs while enabling their team to dedicate more energy to other valuable endeavors.

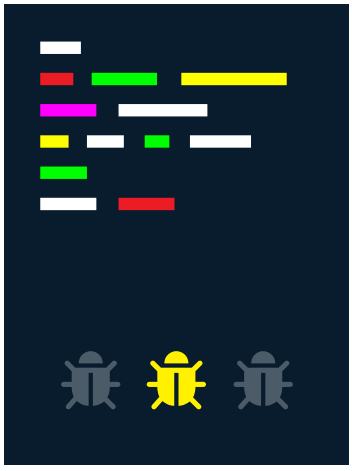
Industry Application Performance Monitoring (APM) Software	
Region Global	**Founded** 2012
Headquarters Amsterdam	

> **KernelCare Enterprise does a simple thing and it does it well. It's probably highly technically complex to achieve, but the actual thing it does is relatively straightforward.**
>
> -Thijs Cadier, Co-Founder of AppSignal

The Challenge

AppSignal provides a comprehensive application monitoring and error tracking tool that helps developers detect, diagnose, and resolve issues in their software applications. Its all-in-one monitoring solution delivers real-time insights and performance metrics, along with alerts and notifications, to ensure the smooth operation of web and mobile applications.

When it comes to cybersecurity and stability, the company needs to run a really tight ship. According to AppSignal Co-founder Thijs Cadier, "Our customers trust us with their data, so we need to be on the ball there, always. We are a relatively small company, so we are always trying to find ways to remove workload from the operations team and have them have less work."

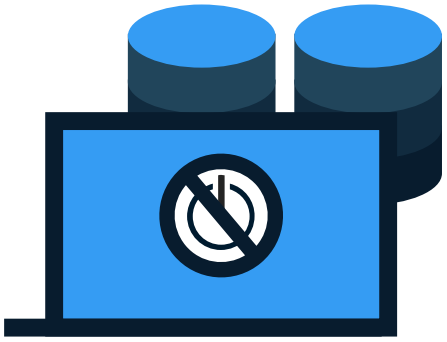


After switching to physical hardware, which involved reboots that took almost an entire day, the team began searching for a live patching tool that could eliminate those reboots and also reduce their workload. Because they only use Ubuntu 20.04, when searching for a live patching solution they opted to go for the distribution vendor's product – Livepatch from Canonical.

> **"I was just assuming that Canonical knows best, because it's their OS, and they turned out to be a bit less fast and customer-focused than I expected."**

Moreover, because Canonical's solution only delivered kernel live patches and not live patches for shared libraries, they still had to reboot quite often. "With Livepatch, it was always vague when we should reboot and if we should reboot. You have to reboot in some cases, but not in others, and nobody could really tell us the difference. We couldn't really figure it out, and nobody at Canonical was able to tell us."

The Solution



Not completely satisfied with their Livepatch experience, after one year of using the product, AppSignal began to look for alternatives and came across TuxCare.

"Another big player in this market is TuxCare. We evaluated their KernelCare product and liked it a lot."

The AppSignal team decided to implement TuxCare's KernelCare Enterprise, which delivers rebootless vulnerability patches on all popular Linux distributions, as well as the LibCare add-on, which extends live patching to shared libraries.

> **"It just replaces the kernel without us having to do anything, and that saves a lot of time."**

"It patches the kernel as well as glibc and OpenSSL if you get the LibCare add-on. It completely replaces instead of patches, so we would not have to reboot at all."

In addition to requiring fewer reboots and being more cost effective than Canonical's Livepatch, TuxCare's live patching solution enabled the AppSignal team to say goodbye to another Livepatch-related inconvenience: Snap. It's a pre-installed package manager that Canonical requires users to run on all their servers.

"It generated some extra noise in the kernel logs. It was a minor annoyance that there was just something running that we don't actually want or really have control over. I was just happy to not have that running anymore. I don't like to have stuff on there that we don't use."

Using KernelCare and LibCare also offered AppSignal total control over their patching timelines: “It comes with a web app we run within our WireGuard network that gives us control over when patches are rolled out. The servers don't all have to check in with Ubuntu, which is sometimes broken.”

The Results

The implementation process for KernelCare Enterprise and the LibCare add-on was quick and relatively painless, according to AppSignal.

The primary benefit that AppSignal has enjoyed since implementing TuxCare’s live patching solutions has been the ability to avoid rebooting.

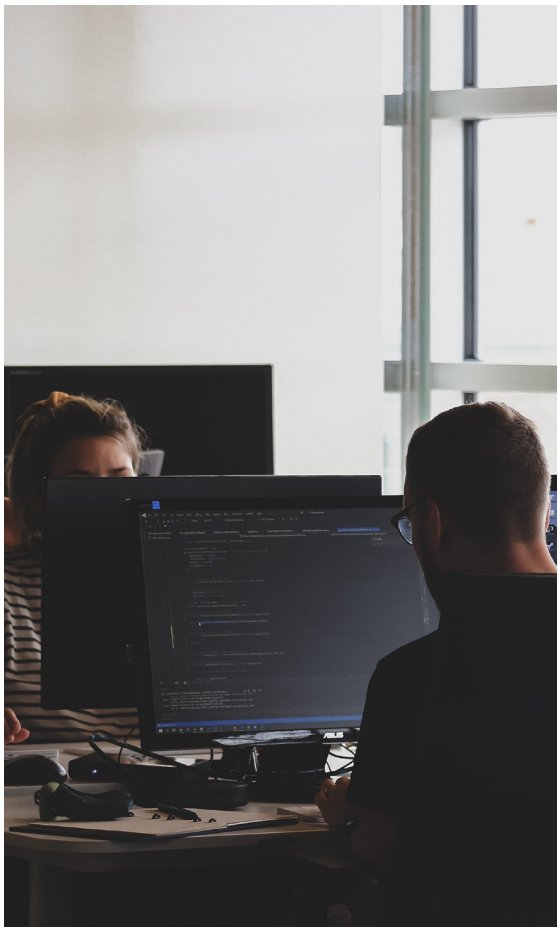
“We don’t have to reboot anymore. We can get away without rebooting at all and just keeping the servers on.”

In addition, the cost savings were significant. The AppSignal team was pleased with the lower per-server price tag of KernelCare Enterprise with the LibCare add-on: “It was in the same ballpark as the virtual machine licenses we were using for Livepatch, while delivering more value.”

In sum, ending their subscription with Livepatch and switching to TuxCare’s live patching solutions enabled AppSignal to reduce costs, offload an unused package manager, get more time back for their team, and truly minimize their patching-related reboots.

“KernelCare and LibCare will be part of our operations for years to come, I expect.”

> **“With fewer reboots, we save on costs, but I would look at it more like saving focus. We’ve got more time now to work on interesting stuff instead of having to babysit a reboot.”**



Why TuxCare?

With TuxCare's family of enterprise Linux security solutions, organizations can automate vulnerability patching, minimize downtime, keep their applications secure and compliant, and get support from a team that knows Linux security best – covering their entire Linux estate, including most popular distributions, end-of-life systems, devices, libraries, and much more.

With the **KernelCare Enterprise** live patching solution, teams can put patching on autopilot for most popular distributions while avoiding downtime, disruptions, and unnecessary maintenance windows.

Extended Lifecycle Support (ELS) enables organizations to continue securely using Linux distributions and software languages that have reached end of life or no longer receive standard security support – delivering vulnerability patches for unsupported versions of CentOS, CentOS Stream, Ubuntu, Debian, Oracle Linux, PHP, and Python.

Our **Enterprise Support for AlmaLinux** offers the commercial support your business needs with break/fix support, automated live patching, extended security updates, continuous compliance, and pay-as-you-go hourly support bundles – giving you access to skilled AlmaLinux security experts whenever you need them.

With **SecureChain for Java**, companies gain access to a single trusted repository of independently verified and vulnerability-free Java packages and libraries, fully compliant with the NIST Secure Software Development Framework – so they can continue to innovate while maintaining the security of their applications.

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