HospitalityGEM replaces dedicated servers with burstable cloud solution

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iomart customer case study

iomart provides cloud solution for HospitalityGEM

industry

Hospitality, Leisure & Tourism

Objective

To replace inflexible dedicated solution with fully scalable cloud

Solution

Managed iomart CloudSure platform and backup

Benefits

· Platform responds better to spikes in traffic

· Properly supports the in-house software

· Much more cost-effective

· IT now aligned to business strategy

HospitalityGEM is a trading name of the Mystery Dining Company Ltd and has more than a decade of experience in specialist guest experience management for the hospitality sector. From its offices in the centre of Bath, it supports more than 5000 restaurants, pubs, hotels and contract catering venues to monitor performance, engage with guests, analyse feedback and match staff behaviour with brand expectations. It also has a network of more than 10,000 mystery guests across 20 countries who prepare detailed reports for its clients.

HospitalityGEM works with some of the most well-known brands in the industry and is growing rapidly at a rate of over 25% a year. As a result it needs a hosting solution that is flexible and scalable to support the in-house bespoke software it has created to analyse the feedback generated and produce reports to help its clients manage and grow their own businesses.

Hospitality GEM

HospitalityGEM turned to iomart after recognising the limitations of their existing hosting arrangements. They were using a dedicated solution, which meant paying for resources that they often were not using and could not add extra resources quickly. If there was an issue it could often take weeks to resolve.

On one occasion there was a huge spike in interest in the company after it was featured on one of the main consumer advice websites. The IT team was able to beef up their server but it was a complicated process and the incident highlighted the fact that a multi-server solution was needed going forward. So it decided to look for a new hosting partner to take it to the cloud.

Phil Collins, Head of Technology for HospitalityGEM, says, "We needed to change our hosting provider to change the way we supported our website and our software and we chose iomart. After detailed initial conversations we were able to flesh out a good solution with iomart's technical team using virtual servers to give us the flexibility and scalability we needed.

"The implementation was complex because we wanted to integrate with our existing Windows Active Directory Domain to simplify access for staff and allow us much greater granular control of resources without the need for users to remember (or write down) another set of credentials. We also had a requirement to connect with existing in-house analysis tools and servers."

Phil continues, "The implementation took time because we had to make a number of changes to our system but there was very little downtime and we were soon seeing the benefits."

The Hospitality GEM platform consists of a mix of managed cloud servers, managed connectivity and a managed security layer. The web and database traffic is split out across two front-end Web Servers, a Web Content Server and a Database Server, all running on the iomart CloudSure platform with Windows Operating Systems. There is a separate Linux load balancing machine on the web front-end to allow web traffic to be shared across the two front-end web servers.

One of the key requirements for HospitalityGEM was to be able to launch additional resources at short notice to assist the platform when there are unexpected spikes in traffic, for instance during promotions or weekly administration tasks. iomart provides additional load balanced 'burst' servers on the platform which can be powered on or off via the Control Panel as required in order to meet this additional resource demand. Since these servers have already been configured and setup within the load-balanced resource pool, they can be implemented with the minimum of lead time and workload for the HospitalityGEM team.

iomart also provides committed internet connectivity to HospitalityGEM which is fully burstable up to 100Mb/s in order that busy periods are fully catered for. If required, technical assistance is provided by the iomart 24x7x365 support team, including hardware support and extended service monitoring.

HospitalityGEM collects a large amount of data from its army of mystery diners and a number of feedback websites. From this, its in-house software creates reports which the company's clients can analyse to drive performance with operational and marketing objectives. As a result, HospitalityGEM also backs up over 200 GB of data on the fully-managed iomart Cloud Backup platform, which expands as required to ensure all critical data is backed up and retained for the required time.

The overall hosting package is a much better solution for HospitalityGEM allowing them to respond effectively to their business requirements. Phil Collins explains, "As a company we have to be flexible and responsive to our clients' needs, so it is important that our hosting provider has exactly the same approach. Using iomart's CloudSure platform suits us much better than the previous hosting we had. We've resolved a lot of the problems we were experiencing and we can now do so much more for less, increasing our CPU in a matter of hours rather than weeks."

For more information about HospitalityGEM visit **www.hospitalitygem.com**