

CASE STUDY

CloudVDI



THE NEED FOR SPEED:

CLOUDVDI'S VIRTUAL DESKTOPS FIND THE FAST LANE WITH HOSTWAY'S COLOCATION HELP

OVERVIEW

CloudVDI (www.cvdi.co) created a remote desktop service to mimic local desktops on mobile devices, using real-time virtualization to make resource-intensive software run at full speed. To make this service possible without an overwhelming capital expenditure, CloudVDI decided to collocate the servers housing their proprietary system in an outside data center. To support their product, they required a hosting partner that could provide reliable power, five 9s of uptime, responsive support and a network that could handle their customers' data loads. Hostway met and exceeded these expectations with a lightning-fast network that has become one of CloudVDI's major selling points, and an experienced, accommodating team of representatives that has provided CloudVDI with a true IT partnership as the company has grown and changed.

PROBLEM: TAKING RESOURCE-INTENSIVE APPLICATIONS ON THE GO

In February 2012, the minds behind CloudVDI recognized a market need for a technology that could endow mobile devices with the power of desktop machines by connecting them with cloud-based virtual desktops hosted on powerful servers. They envisioned a product that would provide the ability to perform resource-intensive rendering for engineering design or animation from a mobile device in real-time. They pictured their customers' employees in the field using computer-aided design (CAD) applications and other desktop software not normally available on their laptops or iPads.

"We knew we had a product that could offer unprecedented mobility and application usage for a manageable monthly operating expense," said Ryan O'Connor, CloudVDI's chief technical officer and a co-founder of the company.

Because of the proprietary, customized nature of the system they were running, CloudVDI wanted to maintain complete control over their hardware.

"The ability to leverage hardware and software in a patent-pending methodology is part of our competitive advantage," said Channing Applegarth, CloudVDI vice president of IT operations.

But they didn't want to take on the expenses involved with building a network and maintaining servers. They decided their best option would be to collocate their custom-built servers in a hosting provider's data center, where the machines would be accessible by CloudVDI when updates were needed but could be monitored by the data center staff for day-to-day maintenance needs. Still, finding the physical home for their robust hardware was only a small piece of the puzzle. Without immense bandwidth and solid network uptime, their product wouldn't work as intended, and their competitive advantage would be irrelevant.

"Even though we were providing our own hardware, who we chose to support it would ultimately play a big part in determining the success or failure of our business," O'Connor explained.

CLOUDVDI AND HOSTWAY: A NEIGHBORLY RELATIONSHIP

O'Connor had worked with [Hostway](#) at a previous employer, and knew the company employed a team of highly knowledgeable support representatives. In addition, Hostway had a [datacenter in Tampa](#),

CloudVDI sought a hosting provider with space to meet their collocation needs and a network that could handle their customers' data-intensive files.

In Hostway, they found a partner who not only exceeded their service expectations, but also provided a network that was so fast it became one of CloudVDI's major selling points to Fortune 500 clients.

CloudVDI found what they were looking for in Hostway:

- Fast network with "jaw-dropping" throughput
- Knowledgeable Microsoft partner
- 100% uptime guarantee
- 24/7/365 monitoring and support
- Customer service that consistently exceeds their expectations

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Florida, where CloudVDI was based. O'Connor immediately saw advantages to the potential relationship and decided to get back in touch.

"We were looking for a few specific traits in a hosting provider: redundancy, reliability, carrier-class accessibility and quality of service. Our success rests on all of these things," O'Connor said.

Hostway offered Cloud VDI the redundancy they required with three layers of power: electrical power, an uninterruptible power supply (UPS), and a backup generator as a failsafe.

"We came in one day, and Hostway was testing the UPS. We got to see first-hand the lengths they went to so that everyone would stay up – at Hostway, the lights will always stay on," O'Connor said.

Hostway also guaranteed 100% uptime, along with 24/7/365 monitoring and support, which had been an important element in CloudVDI's decision to partner with a hosting provider rather than maintaining their servers in-house.

"Colocated space is a dime a dozen," O'Connor said. *"The real requirement is knowing the network is always going to be up, and that we have live service if anything goes wrong. At 3 a.m., I can pick up the phone, and an expert technician is going to answer the call."*

In addition, Hostway and CloudVDI both enjoyed strong ties with Microsoft. Both companies take advantage of Microsoft's Services Provider License Agreement (SPLA), which allows these businesses to license Microsoft software at a reduced rate, in turn providing software services and hosted applications to customers.

"Microsoft's SPLA allows CloudVDI to offer a complete solution via an operational expense model, not a traditional capital expense model," Applegarth said. *"We're able to provide Microsoft-licensed products to customers for a tiny monthly fee instead of a huge upfront cost."*

CloudVDI also participated in [Microsoft's BizSpark program](#), which helps software startups get their feet off the ground by providing access to software development tools and technical support.

"Between SPLA and BizSpark, Microsoft is a big reason why we're succeeding," O'Connor said. *"Hostway knows Microsoft systems and applications backwards and forwards. That made our decision even easier – Hostway was an ideal partner."*

But what ultimately convinced CloudVDI to choose Hostway was a feature they didn't expect. When CloudVDI tested Hostway's network for the first time, they were surprised by the speed of the data transfer.

"Without connectivity, a business like ours goes nowhere," O'Connor said. *"So we knew we needed a good network. But I was blown away by the lightning-fast data exchanges I was seeing on Hostway's network. It's incredible. Whoever built it...did something right."*

CloudVDI felt confident that Hostway was the right provider to meet their [colocation](#) needs and moved forward with securing space in the Tampa data center. But what happened after they became a customer reinforced their decision in ways they didn't anticipate.

RESULT: HOSTWAY GOES ABOVE AND BEYOND

CloudVDI was content that their servers were taken care of at Hostway's Tampa datacenter. They then began to seek office space to house their company headquarters.

"I mentioned in passing to the Hostway datacenter manager that we were looking for some office space," O'Connor described.

The Hostway datacenter manager happened to know there was space for rent in Hostway's datacenter building, and took the initiative to reach out to the building's super.

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“Twenty minutes later, I’m on the phone talking about the room we want,” O’Connor said. “The landlord said, ‘Oh, you’re friends of Hostway.’ And she took care of us, just like Hostway has.”

Finding themselves in the same building, Hostway saw another simple way for CloudVDI to avoid an expense. They offered to run a Gigabit Ethernet MPLS connection from CloudVDI’s office space directly to their colocation cage as a cross-connect service. CloudVDI can use the internet from their cage, while also having direct high-speed access to their collocated servers for maintenance and data transfers.

“They didn’t have to do that for us, but it was the first thing that occurred to them,” O’Connor said. “Serving the customer’s best interests just comes naturally to these guys.”

As CloudVDI’s business took off, they watched the speed of the network evolve from a nice benefit to one of their major selling points.

“We walk into potential client meetings, and over and over again they say, ‘I don’t know if you can support us.’ Then they give us the specs, and I say, ‘Is that all you have?’” O’Connor said. “We run Speedtest.net, and jaws drop. With our Hostway network, the throughput is amazing. It’s just flawless, and has enabled us to land some Top Fortune 100 clients we might not have been able to get otherwise.”

As CloudVDI quadrupled their footprint with Hostway, they determined they needed an abnormally high amount of voltage – Hostway’s standard power is about 4,800 kilowatts, and CloudVDI needed 12,000 to 15,000. CloudVDI presented their dilemma, and Hostway got to work.

“I went to Hostway and said, ‘I need to be able to plug this in, and I’m not sure if it’s possible.’ The next day they had electricians setting it up,” O’Connor said. “The power was prepared before our gear had even arrived.”

As CloudVDI’s service has grown, Hostway has met the challenges of its expanding requirements, allowing CloudVDI to focus on how to best serve its own customers.

“No request has been too ridiculous. Hostway just makes it work,” O’Connor said.

CONCLUSION

With the success this partnership has provided, CloudVDI has ambitious plans for the growth of its business: *“We’d like to be four times the size we are now within the next four months,”* O’Connor said. *“We’re hoping to get to 10-15,000 desktops around early 2013.”*

O’Connor credits much of his company’s swift success to the elite package Hostway allows them to pass on to their customers.

“I didn’t think we would be able to afford this much bandwidth, and never dreamed anyone offered the amazing level of support we have with Hostway,” O’Connor said. *“What Hostway gives you is more than other guys – first of all, an incredible network to run on, backed by an eagerness to help, but also knowledge that can’t be taught. Experience.”*

Interested in learning how colocation with Hostway could help your business get up and running at lightning-fast speeds?

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