Microsoft

ISV Switches from Amazon to Microsoft Azure to Gain More Cloud Services, Better Support

Customer: K2
Website: www.k2.com
Customer Size: 300 employees
Country or Region: United States
Industry: Software
Partner: Vision Solutions
Website: www.visionsolutions.com

Customer Profile

K2 makes software that businesses use to build workflow applications. K2 products are used by more than 2,000 companies in 80 countries. It is a global company, headquartered in Bellevue, Washington.

Software and Services

- Microsoft Azure
  - Microsoft Azure Virtual Machines

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www.microsoft.com/casestudies

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>
> Dave Marcus, Senior Vice President of Partners and Alliances, K2

To make it more efficient to run a range of cloud services, software vendor K2 decided to switch from Amazon EC2 to Microsoft Azure. Fellow Microsoft Partner member Vision Solutions helped K2 accomplish the migration. With Microsoft Azure, K2 gets a rich suite of cloud services, easier portability between private and public clouds, outstanding performance and scalability, detailed reporting on IT resource usage, and deep technical support. By working with Vision Solutions, K2 was able to migrate quickly from Amazon to Microsoft cloud platform.

Business Needs

More than 2,000 companies around the world rely on K2 software to design and build business applications that involve line-of-business data, forms, workflows, and reports. The company has a longstanding relationship with Microsoft, is a global Gold Application Development partner in the Microsoft Partner Network, and uses a Microsoft-based private cloud to run most of its internal operational applications.

When Microsoft first announced Microsoft Azure, the Microsoft public cloud platform, K2 was eager to use it, too. However, the early versions of Microsoft Azure did not meet all of its needs, so it established a large environment in Amazon Elastic Compute Cloud (EC2).

In 2012, K2 planned to launch a major cloud-based product and revisited Microsoft Azure, which by then offered a broader range of cloud capabilities. K2 also wanted better support. "We never had great support from Amazon," says Dave Marcus, Senior Vice President of Partners and Alliances at K2. "If we had problems, the only thing we could do was to post a question on an online forum."

Microsoft Azure

K2 committed to launching its new product in Microsoft Azure and realized that it made sense to have all of its assets in the same cloud platform. K2 wanted to migrate its nearly 300 instances of Amazon EC2 to Microsoft Azure but was concerned about the amount of work involved.

Solution

Microsoft put K2 in touch with Vision Solutions, a fellow member of the Microsoft Partner Network that makes a migration tool called Double-Take Move. Double-Take Move copies all data, applications, and registry settings from a source server to another physical, virtual, or cloud server. This happens in the background so that users can continue working without being aware that the migration is in progress.

"There are many migration tools on the market that boast low server downtime, but they require that users be offline during the migration," says Marcus. "With Double-Take Move, users can stay online. Another key benefit of working with Vision Solutions was the fact that its technology has built-in encryption, so we could send the virtual machines across the Internet."

Unlike other migration tools, Double-Take Move uses real-time replication to move data online discretely and efficiently to minimize downtime. This replication is not only transparent to the users but also to the underlying physical, virtual, or cloud platform so that servers can be migrated from anywhere to anywhere.

Double-Take Move is highly automated and includes a number of pre-migration checks to help ensure that migrations will proceed without interruption. The Double-Take Move migration process leaves the source servers fully intact but powered off just in case there is any need to resume from the original server.

"We're betting our business on this platform," Marcus says. "Our offerings will ultimately consume thousands of Microsoft Azure Virtual Machines."

Benefits

By switching from Amazon EC2 to Microsoft Azure, K2 has gained access to a broad suite of cloud services, enjoys easy portability between private and public clouds, and can deliver great application performance, scalability, and reliability to its customers, partners, and employees.

Breadth of Cloud Services
"With Microsoft Azure, K2 has access to many more cloud services than Amazon offers and it's also familiar to the K2 developers, whose primary development skillset is Microsoft centric," Marcus says. "We want to build workflow solutions, and with Microsoft continuously building out Microsoft Azure, we can maintain that focus rather than developing cloud infrastructure services."

Easy Hybrid Cloud Transportability
The easy movement of virtual machines between Microsoft Azure and the K2 private cloud gives K2 tremendous operational flexibility. "I can treat an instance of Microsoft Azure just like an instance of Hyper-V," Marcus says. "To import an instance of Hyper-V to Microsoft Azure, or vice versa, we just copy a live virtual machine. For example, this hybrid cloud transportability is useful to K2 when the company wants to take an application that was developed in its private cloud, test it in the cloud, and then launch and scale it as a production environment in the cloud or on-premises."

Great Application Performance, Scalability, and Reliability
By using Microsoft Azure, K2 can run its solutions in the same cloud that powers Office 365 and Microsoft Dynamics CRM Online, which are both important for many K2 applications. "By running K2 in Microsoft Azure, we can be very close to the datacenters running these other Microsoft cloud products so that we can deliver the best possible network performance and the lowest possible latency between application components," Marcus says.

Rich Reporting and Analytics
K2 gathers a significant amount of data from Microsoft Azure to understand which resources it is using. "Knowing which IT services we are using, how they impact our costs, and the ability to have multiple Azure subscriptions under one master agreement is key to our IT cost management," Marcus says.

Deep Technical Support
The engineering support and overall attentiveness that K2 receives from Microsoft are critical elements of its success with Microsoft Azure. "We are an engineering company and need deep engineering relationships with our cloud vendor," Marcus says. "Microsoft 'gets' what it takes to support us at the enterprise level, and Amazon never did."

Rapid Migration from One Cloud Platform to Another
With the help of Vision Solutions, K2 was able to complete a quick, painless migration out of Amazon into Microsoft Azure. "If we would have attempted the migration on our own, it would have taken up to a week per EC2 instance to migrate, and we had 300 instances to move," Marcus says. "With Double-Take Move, we were able to quickly migrate all of them. We're very committed to Microsoft Azure and will continue to invest in new services."