Rackspace®

rockyou

Social Gamer RockYou Takes Advantage of Rackspace Private Cloud Powered by OpenStack to Bolster Infrastructure and Uptime Reliability

Interactive game provider and Rackspace optimize gameplay, advertising and social operations.

San Francisco-based RockYou purchases the rights to existing social video games, then incorporates in-game ads, and rebrands them as RockYou games.Delivering interactive media content to engaged audiences online, RockYou boasts a portfolio of free-to-play games including dozens of company-owned and partner titles across key platforms, genres and demographics.

Founded in 2005, RockYou runs the world's largest in-game video ad platform for premium brands, connecting them to 75 million+ users. RockYou applies its proprietary technology and expertise as a top social game developer to run the world's best monetized ad platform for games, so advertisers can reach highly engaged consumers, and game developers can monetize their entire player base.

With advertising a significant portion of company revenue, integrated RockYou video advertising targets consumers online, on Facebook and in mobile platforms. The company's rapid growth led management to rethink its infrastructure.

PRIMING FOR GROWTH WITH SMARTER WAYS TO SCALE

As RockYou acquires games, Rackspace helps them grow quickly while maintaining high uptime.

"Not long ago we had our own data center, and were facing probably a multi-

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> "We've had very good luck with Rackspace so far. I always felt like I got tremendous support both from my account team and from the technical support folks at Rackspace that I talk to, and any issues that we had were fixed very quickly."
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> **Brent Allard**
> Senior Director of IT and Ops, RockYou

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million dollar hardware refresh," said Brent Allard, Senior Director of IT and Ops for RockYou. "As we decided to move that existing infrastructure and functions to Rackspace, we hit upon a new strategy."

RockYou moved to begin acquiring and operating mature games, essentially putting out existing content rather than committing resources to majority new development.

"Rackspace helped us tremendously," said Allard. "The original environment was just spec for what we had, and then we started acquiring other games, and I started throwing requests at our Rackspace account managers."

The new Rackspace relationship has enabled the company to expand its portfolio. "In an 18-month period we have acquired roughly 15 different titles from five different companies," said Allard. "We've gotten every game up and running reliably with Rackspace."

> "You can really tell how much Rackspace people value the feedback of their customers. It's something I've never seen with any other partner that I've worked with in 20-plus years."

Brent Allard
Senior Director of IT and Ops, RockYou

One of RockYou's large moves occurred when it acquired three Disney games — Words of Wonder, City Girl, and Gardens of Time — each carrying a significant amount of centralized technology setup. Taking advantage of MongoDB, the Rackspace Private Cloud, and its Rackspace team, RockYou was able to launch the Disney games in an extremely short timeframe.

"Within three months to the day of signing the Disney games, we went live in Rackspace," said Allard. "It was very successful. All three went live on the initial migration date, and have been up and running ever since."

REAL EFFICIENCY, SIGNIFICANT SAVINGS

Using OpenStack — first and foremost for its flexibility, but also for its private cloud advantages — RockYou can quickly spin-up large numbers of VMs, particularly web servers.

"We're a small team with six people, and being able to free our own mental bandwidth regarding infrastructure has been one of the key benefits of working with Rackspace," said Allard. "We define one web server and in an hour, can have 60 up and running. As for cost, now we can fully utilize OpenStack private cloud, putting in multiple VMs, instead of what used to be dedicated hardware before Rackspace."

Because they have acquired so many games in recent months, RockYou has felt the efficiency and flexibility advantages of OpenStack — contrasted with the dedicated hardware where before, the process of making changes or setting up servers between environments had been much more complex and time-consuming. "Rackspace is definitely an extension of our IT team," said Allard. "Our environment has constantly evolved throughout the last year, so now when we see a spike coming, we are ready for it."

"Now, any time there's either a big event, or we're going live with a game in the environment for the first time, our Rackspace team is watching things to make sure everything goes smoothly. We've not had any issues."

FANATICAL SUPPORT FROM A TECHNOLOGY PARTNER

"We get tremendous support both from the account team and from the technical support team at Rackspace. For RockYou, uptime is extremely important, both for our games and for our advertising business," said Allard. "We're now setting up a [disaster recovery] site within Rackspace at a different physical facility for our ads business, on the off chance of a major event that brings down our primary facility."

Having already quadrupled in size from 2013 to the present, RockYou expects continued rapid growth over the next five years and counts on Rackspace to help them manage this growth.

"We've thrown huge requests at our Rackspace account team, and they've been able to get things up and running in time for us to make these deals," he said. "To manage all the recent growth in our own fully operated data center would have probably taken 20 people, whereas with Rackspace over the next couple of years we can keep the team nimble."