



The Computerworld Honors Program

Honoring those who use Information Technology to benefit society

Final Copy of Case Study

Status:

Laureate

Year:

2013

Organization Name:

International Rescue Committee (IRC)

Organization URL:

www.rescue.org

Project Name:

n/a

Please select the category in which you are submitting your entry:

Human Services

Please provide an overview of the nominated project. Describe the problem it was intended to solve, the technology or approach used, how it was innovative and any technical or other challenges that had to be overcome for successful implementation and adoption. (In 300 words or less.)

Overview: A technology refresh was needed to alleviate an aging IT infrastructure and also help improve humanitarian efforts around the globe. As an added bonus, the new infrastructure will free up IRC's staff to work on more important projects such as improving data communications and connections to field workers dispatched to global areas in need of humanitarian help. Problem: The IRC's technology infrastructure serves more than 5,000 users at 150 offices across 40 countries. Since humanitarian aid isn't a 9-to-5 job, the business needs to remain running 24 hours per day. By 2011, the company's server and storage infrastructure in Midtown Manhattan began to show its age. Timely and accurate sharing of data, files and logistics were significantly slowing down. With little

redundancy and an overburdened engineering and IT staff, the data center was in need of its own aid mission. Technology Approach: Datapipe's Exchange as a Service; Managed SharePoint Environment; Managed Private Cloud; SQL Database; Management and Administration Backups; Fault Tolerant Disaster Recovery Plan; System Monitoring. Other challenges to overcome: The system contained more than 6,000 user mailboxes running on an aging Exchange 2007 platform hosted in their own facilities. This existing platform offered little redundancy and no backup power meaning critical data was at risk every time the IRC encountered their own IT issues. To alleviate the redundancy problems, IRC made it a goal to implement an effective disaster recovery plan in the event of an IT failure. Additionally, the organization set to place all enterprise services in a secure, fault tolerant environment. IRC's IT staff wanted to offload management of all non-specialized technologies (such as Exchange, VMware, SQL) and remove the storage management burden from their daily task lists.

When was this project implemented or last updated? (Please specify month and year.) Has it incorporated new technologies and/or other innovations since its initial deployment? (In 300 words or less.)

In 2011, the IRC's server and storage infrastructure in Midtown Manhattan began to show its age. Timely and accurate sharing of data, files and logistics were significantly slowing down. With little redundancy and an overburdened engineering and IT staff, the data center was in need of being updated. They turned to Datapipe for help. Within six months, the IRC had made a successful transition to Datapipe, making use of a hybrid solution that combined traditional colocation features alongside managed services. While the IRC retains control of key business applications and network management, the company now offloads Exchange, VMware farms, database clusters, backup and system monitoring to Datapipe.

Is implementation of the project complete? If no, please describe the project's phases and which phase the project is now in. (In 300 words or less.)

Yes. The project is complete. Within six months, the International Rescue Committee had made a successful transition to Datapipe making use of a hybrid solution that combined traditional colocation features alongside managed services. While the IRC retains control of key business applications and network management, the company now offloads Exchange, VMware farms, database clusters, backup and system monitoring to Datapipe. New colocation services are supported out of Datapipe's New Jersey and California data centers and the IRC rents individual racks from Datapipe to manage VMware, SQL clusters, Exchange, bandwidth and storage. With guidance from the IRC, Datapipe was also able to move the company's data storage and re-stage the data from 10

mission-critical applications such as supply chain and procurement, Intranet and SharePoint, as well as various legacy desktop applications. To help ensure a constant data flow, Datapipe also implemented multiple failover alternatives, ensuring that the IRC would experience very little downtime.

Please provide at least one example of how the technology project has benefited a specific individual or organization. Feel free to include personal quotes from individuals who have directly benefited from the work. (In 300 words or less.)

"Our IT infrastructure just wasn't built for what we were asking. We wanted this small, dedicated staff to not only service headquarters but to deliver IT functionality to some of the most remote locations on the planet. With so much at stake, it just didn't make any sense to rely on this aging infrastructure," said Michael Boeglin, Director of Global Infrastructure, International Rescue Committee. "Whenever you say the word 'migration' in our business, it raises eyebrows. Because our IT infrastructure is so critical to everything we do, downtime is simply not acceptable. Additionally, since users are often housed in remote locations and working off intermittent satellite links, there's just no way to stay in touch during this critical migration. It soon became clear that our only choice was to find a provider who could guarantee as little downtime as possible," continued Boeglin. "At the IRC, every minute of every day is consumed with helping those in need. We simply don't have the time to worry about the what-ifs of IT infrastructure failure. Datapipe has effectively taken this burden off our plates, letting us stick to what we do best: save lives."

Would this project be considered an innovation, a best practice or other notable advancement that could be adopted by or tailored for other organizations and uses? If yes, please describe that here. (In 300 words or less.)

Datapipe clients benefit from their unique consultative process to ensure business objectives are addressed. Through consultation with Datapipe Sales Engineers the appropriate infrastructure(s) and managed services are identified and recommended for the solution. This process enables Datapipe's team to build complex architectures that plan for growth and effectively combine the benefits of cloud, physical, and virtualized infrastructures in a best of class custom solution catered to specific client use.



If there are any other details that the judges should know about this project, please note them here. (In 300 words or less.)

The IRC now has the flexibility to build out its infrastructure on the fly, rolling out new applications to field workers as necessary. Datapipe is also the foundation for the organization's Information and Communications Technologies for Development (ICT4D) initiative, bringing up-to-date communications technologies to less developed regions. Datapipe is also now providing a SharePoint portal to offer access to multiple customer applications such as grant management and time tracking for system users distributed across the globe.