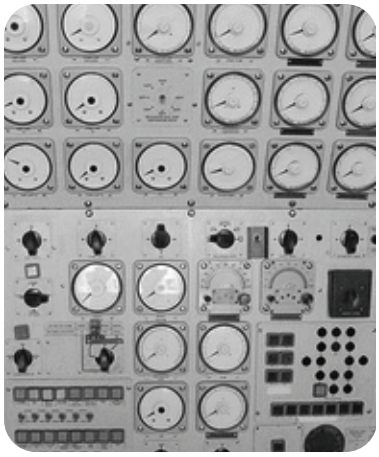
CASE STUDY

TuneCore Powers Music Publishing Growth Using RightScale

"The RightScale team rocks. They reduced our timeline by 3 months and cut our hosting bills by 40% - highly recommended"

GARY BURKE, TUNECORE CTO



RESULTS SUMMARY

- ROI in 3 months
- 40% cost reduction in hosting
- Increased scalability of core music processing & web presence

TuneCore: Music to the Masses

TuneCore puts music publishing in reach of every musical artist. It turns the traditional industry model upside down by making it easy for any performer to publish music directly to iTunes, Rhapsody, MusicNet, Napster, and other popular digital music stores at a small cost and without the middleman. Once sales occur, TuneCore also automates the distribution of royalties to the artist – and passes through 100% of the proceeds.

RightScale: Spend Less, Scale More

RightScale provides a platform and consulting services that enable companies to create scalable web solutions running on Amazon Web Services (AWS) that are reliable, easy to manage, and cost less. The RightScale dashboard saves time in maintaining, managing and monitoring all AWS activities, while RightGrid coordinates the auto-scaling of servers according to usage load. The RightImage library provides pre-built installation templates for common software stacks, and RightScale DeltaSets make it easy to customize and manage modifications to machine images. Together with Amazon's Elastic Compute Cloud (EC2), Simple Storage Service (S3) and Simple Queue Service (SQS) – RightScale enables a next-generation platform for deploying highly scalable web applications.

THE CHALLENGE: Scale TuneCore's web application to overcome the limitations of traditional hosting environments

With its game-changing business model, TuneCore has experienced rapid growth in subscribers, and distributed over $1.4M in royalties in the last year. Not surprisingly, this growth has put a strain on the TuneCore.com web infrastructure, and created the need for a scalable web platform that can accommodate continued growth and bursts of subscriber traffic that are not always predictable. In addition, TuneCore has been preparing major marketing campaigns that will further drive substantial increases in usage.

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The traditional hosting service used by TuneCore requires significant lead times – as well as long-term commitments – to deploy new servers. That approach makes expansion costly and inflexible. TuneCore realized that Amazon's AWS platform offered a solution, but they wanted to continue to focus on their core application development rather than investing time in learning how to deploy a reliable and scalable system on AWS.

IMPLEMENTATION: Moving to EC2, S3 and SQS

TuneCore.com users enter their album data on the site, and upload album art and music they want to publish. TuneCore processes and submits the album to digital stores and services. So, TuneCore must handle both storage and processing of music files – each of which can peak quickly based on the popularity of the business.

In the first phase of the project, RightScale moved TuneCore's music and artwork storage to Amazon S3 and implemented an auto-scaling music transcoding system on EC2 using RightGrid. The RightGrid system offloads the CPU-intensive transcoding tasks from the web server to a dynamically scalable array of worker servers. When a user uploads a music track, the web server enqueues a work descriptor on an SQS queue, which is then processed by one of the worker servers. RightGrid adjusts the number of worker servers automatically based on the state of the queue. In the second phase of the project, RightScale will help migrate TuneCore's web application tier to EC2 in order to allow dynamic scaling of web and application servers.

RESULTS: Scalable and affordable web applications

As a result of partnering with RightScale, TuneCore achieved a more scalable and less expensive music transcoding solution. It cut its development timeline by 3 months, and has reduced its hosting bill by 40%. RightScale's staged implementation approach enabled TuneCore to easily move discrete application components to AWS, while continuing to focus internal staff on core application development. TuneCore now has a flexible and highly scalable web application where hosting costs are based on actual load and usage.

KEY BENEFITS

- ROI in 3 months
- Cut hosting bills by 40%
- Reduce development timeline
- Hosting costs based on load, no long-term commits or idle servers
- Leverage RightScale's best practices. Focus on core application development.
- Staged implementation enables absorbing changes incrementally and minimizing risk during transition.

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