

markettiers4dc delivers award-winning online broadcasts on Zend & Rackspace® solution



www.markettiers4dc.com

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Kevin MacGregor,
Head of Digital and Technical Services,
markettiers4dc

Customer: markettiers4dc

Geography: United Kingdom

Industry: Marketing Communications / Broadcast Marketing

Challenges: Professional hosting service for their mission-critical PHP application with the following:

- Guaranteed application uptime
- Optimum performance
- 24/7 reliability
- Network monitoring
- Enterprise level support

Solution: Zend Platform on Rackspace Dedicated Hosting Infrastructure

Markettiers4dc started in 1994, with the aim of effectively incorporating broadcast media as a central part of any communications strategy and has evolved into the UK's leading broadcast marketing communications specialist, utilizing the newest communications technologies for effective marketing communications. Their numerous accomplishments were recognized in 2007 when they received "**Best Use of Broadcast Award**" at the PRWeek Awards.

With an ever-growing number of media channels and with consumers increasingly able to select the ways in which they receive information, markettiers4dc continually pioneers ways of reaching audiences. Within their services, the company runs online broadcast channels for their customers via their sites, Webchats TV (www.webchats.tv), Opinion Matters (www.opinionmatters.co.uk) and OMLive! (www.omlive.tv). These online channels enable companies to conduct strategic marketing activities such as aggregated interactive content, market research, customer satisfaction and employee satisfaction. The live streaming videos can host 10,000 users in a chat room simultaneously which are syndicated to large ISP partners including AOL, Tiscali, Virgin Media and Lycos.

Markettiers4dc customers range from small companies to global brand leaders such as Vodafone and Camelot, and charities such as the NSPCC.

The Challenge

Markettiers4dc's previous hosting provider did not deliver the top-level support that they expected, undermining markettiers4dc's confidence in the quality of the service they could offer customers. The company's main priority was to move to a hosting company that could ensure them the high level of service with a "go that extra mile" attitude. Because their interactive channels are PHP applications within a LAMP infrastructure, markettiers4dc searched for a PHP-based solution with the network monitoring and scalability to make their applications reliable and flexible enough to handle simultaneous customer sessions ranging from a few hundred to the thousands; 24/7.

"When running a broadcast, our customers never know whether participation is going to be in the low hundreds or in the high thousands, but we have to be prepared for all eventualities. Our whole business and our customers' reputations depend on us providing a reliable, responsive and scalable solution" explained Kevin MacGregor, Head of Digital and Technical Services at markettiers4dc.

The Solution: Zend Platform on Rackspace Hosting Servers

At the beginning of 2007, markettiers4dc moved its production systems to a customized network infrastructure provided by Rackspace UK. The move to Rackspace was made in order for markettiers4dc to offer robust and reliable interactive online broadcasting to its clients while focusing on its core business—marketing communications. It wanted to guarantee there would be no down time or bottlenecks which could have a critical effect on operations.

“Of all the companies we surveyed Rackspace, stood out by the sheer number of positive recommendations—working with them has been worth every penny.”

Kevin MacGregor,
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Rackspace backed their service with Fanatical Support® assisted by scalability testing and capacity planning services. Rackspace’s infrastructure uses Red Hat Enterprise Linux 4, MySQL 4 and PHP 5 with Zend Platform, the PHP Web Application Server, and partners with each of these vendors to provide full service and vendor escalation for the complete LAMP stack. The company’s **Intensive Hosting** service is designed specifically for businesses running mission-critical LAMP operations that need a customized environment with network availability guarantees. In addition, Rackspace UK’s Solutions team provides a number of related services including performance testing, scalability planning and database optimization which greatly increased markettiers4dc’s performance **200X** and capacity by **11X**.

By partnering with Zend, Rackspace has also extended their service capability into PHP application code and architecture. Zend Platform integrated on Rackspace Dedicated Hosting Infrastructure gave markettiers4dc peace of mind and fulfilled all of their hosting requirements including:

- **Guaranteed Application Uptime**

“Zend Platform was an essential addition to our infrastructure. While our online broadcast video channel is real-time streamed via an Akamai content delivery network, our interactive channels surrounding it are PHP applications served from a fully supported LAMP infrastructure. As these applications are real-time events, questionnaires, chats and surveys related to the live broadcast’s content, it is essential that service reliability and performance are consistent and optimized. Zend Platform provided us with the ability to monitor our application around the clock, guarantee its uptime and improve performance.” said Kevin MacGregor, markettiers4dc’s Head of Digital and Technical Services.

- **Optimum Performance**

“Testing results made the decision to work with Zend Platform very obvious to us.

Our system’s responsiveness under high concurrent load was immediately boosted **350%** just by ‘plugging in’ Zend Platform” MacGregor added .

“We know we will get much more than that by implementing Zend Platform’s additional caching options. The fact that they integrate with our choice of Zend’s PHP 5 Framework only solidified our decision. Zend Platform is essential for our PHP production systems and the application insight capabilities also integrate with our development cycle proving invaluable by highlighting application bottlenecks, reliability issues and scalability concerns” Macgregor also noted .

Zend Platform enables major system improvements, without modifying application code which is especially useful for 3rd-party applications where companies may not be familiar with the source code. In addition, a range of API’s let users optimize their applications in a highly granular way especially when dealing with personalized data, large downloads or operations that can be handled asynchronously to improve user experience.

An effective caching strategy increases PHP application performance, reduces database load and results in improved overall system efficiency. Zend Platform customers have reported gains from **20X** to as much as **120X**.

“Using Zend Platform ... customers can detect, reproduce and resolve application reliability and performance issues before they become critical. That’s nice for our support team, but even better for our customers, who save time by pinpointing errors in a fraction of the time it would take them in the past.”

Kevin MacGregor,
Head of Digital and Technical Services,
markettiers4dc

"It is clearly to our advantage that Rackspace and Zend are partners, it is win-win-win for us. The combined skills and technology infrastructure provide us with a solid basis for our continuing expansion and an infrastructure that is tuned to handle any future growth activity on our site."

Nik Harta, Marketing Director,
markettiers4dc

- **24/7 Reliability**

"markettiers4dc's business is completely dependent on providing a reliable online service for its clients, and Rackspace ensures employees are available around-the-clock, every day of the year," said Brian Garvey, Partner Manager, Rackspace. "We guarantee that customers receive an immediate response by providing unlimited technical telephone support. Over 99.4 per cent of our support calls are answered within five seconds by support specialists. This level of support is precisely what companies like markettiers4dc require to be confident that top-notch service is always available. Our partnerships with Zend, Red Hat and MySQL provide the service companies need for applications running on the full LAMP Stack."

- **Network Monitoring**

"One component of our dedication to customer service is proactive application monitoring." added Garvey. "Our Intensive Hosting customers already enjoy multiple levels of systems monitoring, but using Zend Platform's PHP intelligence adds a dimension of high performance and reliability that the markettiers4dc mission-critical applications require. Customers can detect, reproduce and resolve application reliability and performance issues before they become critical. That's nice for our support team, but even better for our customers, who save time by pinpointing errors in a fraction of the time it would have taken them in the past."

- **Enterprise Level Support**

"Our key requirement was a good level of proactive support and understanding of our business. All of the companies came in with solid offerings on paper, but Rackspace, stood out with the number of positive recommendations they got. Working with them has been worth every penny" Kevin MacGregor, markettiers4dc's Head of Digital and Technical Services.

Looking Forward

Nik Harta, Marketing Director at markettiers4dc commented on his company's future plans: "Rackspace and Zend's expertise are a great addition to our internal competencies. Over the next couple of months, markettiers4dc is planning to migrate all their applications to the Rackspace servers – taking full advantage of the Zend/Rackspace infrastructure. It is clearly to our advantage that Rackspace and Zend are partners; it is win-win-win for us. The combined skills and technology infrastructure provide us with a solid basis for our continuing expansion and an infrastructure that is tuned to handle any future growth activity on our site. We pride ourselves on providing the best broadcast solutions for our clients and we feel assured that our future ambitions can be achieved with Rackspace and Zend's support"

Zend Platform

Zend Platform is the only application server for PHP that supports the performance, management, integration and enterprise scalability requirements of organizations using PHP for their business-critical applications. By providing capabilities that streamline development and deployment. Zend Platform improves user experience, application responsiveness, integration to your existing infrastructure and increase application reliability and scalability.

Rackspace Intensive Hosting

Intensive Hosting from Rackspace is a unique approach representing the very best in Tier 1 customized hosting solutions. Rackspace assumes full accountability for your mission-critical Web application including monitoring, analyzing report trends, looking at future opportunities and emerging issues relevant to the hosting environment. Distinguishing support features include:

- Complete accountability for infrastructure uptime via comprehensive and custom monitoring to ensure maximum reliability and performance
- Assignment of a lead technician to proactively consult on the technical requirements of the solution
- Project managed change control to ensure the smooth deployment, scaling and migration as and when needed.

Intensive Hosting is ideal for companies looking to outsource their mission-critical hosting operations to a focused, reliable and experienced hosting provider.

Read more about Zend/Rackspace UK joint offering
www.rackspace.co.uk/zend & www.zend.com/rackspace

For more information about Zend Technologies products and services visit: www.zend.com

For more information about Hosting Solutions from Rackspace visit www.rackspace.co.uk

For further details contact uk-rackspace@zend.com



The PHP Company