

Kabam Success Story



With 60 million installations, Kabam games are in a realm of their own. The company's wildly popular Kingdoms of Camelot Facebook game boasts millions of player-citizens worldwide. Kabam is on a quest to deliver even more engaging social media games.

"Most social network games are casual," says Chris Carvalho, COO of Kabam. "At Kabam, we develop games that are more immersive and engaging, borrowing features from traditional game play and combining them with social networking." This combination attracts veteran game players who have never tried social network gaming, but also draws in players who have tried several social network games and are looking for something more sophisticated and compelling. For example, players in Kingdoms of Camelot build resources, complete quests, and form alliances to defend their realms or attack other kingdoms.

ENVIRONMENT

- Joyent SmartMachines
- Zeus Load Balancer
- MySQL
- Memcached
- PHP5
- MySQL5
- Apache

The Challenge

"There are a number of challenges in the social gaming environment today, such as rapid deployment of new features and code, as well as the ability to quickly deploy more resources. With the viral nature of social games, demand can grow quite fast," said Michael Li, CTO of Kabam.

The company needed a platform that could absorb an explosion in traffic without disrupting game play.



Scalability. With literally millions of gamers, Kabam needed a platform that could easily scale up or down to meet sudden increases or ebbs in demand. Rather than stocking a datacenter with its own servers, routers, and storage, the company wanted to host its products on a scalable cloud infrastructure.



Development Platform. Because Kabam is constantly improving and enhancing its existing games as well as creating new ones, it needed a development environment that could easily accommodate beta installations and mirror production servers with no impact on the live network. Kabam knew developers use more network resources during initial periods of new game programming and far less when a game is stable and deployed. A traditional data center would probably require over provisioning, adding more hardware than is needed on a day-to-day basis.



Resource Management. While Kabam has a top-flight operations staff, it was looking for a way to leverage their abilities and grow its business without over staffing its operations center. A solution that could increase their management resources without breaking its operation budget would be the perfect fit.



Reliability and Support. Its worldwide presence meant that Kabam had to deliver peak performance around the clock. Social networking gamers from Shanghai to Cincinnati depended on Kabam being there. The company couldn't afford downtime or poor performance.

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After deciding that a cloud environment was the most effective choice for its growing game empire, Kabam decided to enlist Joyent.

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Michael Li,
CTO, Kabam



CUSTOMER PROFILE

Company: Kabam

Segment: Social Networking/Entertainment

Location: US

The Solution

After deployment, Kabam found the following benefits hosting its gaming worlds on the Joyent cloud:



Easy Scalability. "Kingdoms of Camelot is a world-based game.

When one world fills up, we can quickly deploy another on the Joyent cloud," said Michael Li, CTO of Kabam. "We don't have to pre-configure or preorder whole new systems." The company can easily scale up or scale down depending on demand. The bursting capability of Joyent's SmartOS easily handles any sudden spikes in game traffic, and new server resources can be added quickly, with no network disruption. In fact, Joyent cloud deployments can get up to eight times the memory and CPU capacity during spikes in activity. Automatic bursting capacity plus fast resource deployment equals smooth performance for Kabam gamers.



Flexible Development Platform. "With Joyent we can build a development environment larger than we could afford than if we had to go out and buy and maintain all those servers. And when we're through, we just shrink the environment," said Michael Li. Beta tests can be performed on a mirror of the production environment, insuring that the code is ready to go live. When engineering OKs beta software for release, it can quickly roll it out to the live network. Regardless of its development needs, Kabam can quickly deploy and configure the proper cloud-based platform for new engineering projects.



Extra Management Resources. "The Joyent team works closely with us. They know our applications, our technology," said Li. "We have a great ops team, but Joyent has substantially reduced our need for adding any operations staff." Joyent is able to offer hardware management and monitoring 24x7, and can assist with any resource issue as part of its standard service. As a result, Kabam is now able to enjoy a larger operating environment with no additional management costs.



Superior Support. "It's personally satisfying to me that Joyent support is so responsive," said Chris Carvalho. "Any time we've contacted them—day or late at night—we get an answer quickly."