

# SHOPULARITY Success Story

## SHOPULARITY

SHOPULARITY is a social network, commerce engine and novel platform for brand promotion and viral marketing. The site runs contests that give high-end prizes to participants based on how many votes they can secure from other SHOPULARITY members during the course of the contest. Contestants' popularity always hangs in the balance, however, as voters can take their vote away and give it to someone else at any moment.

Contests are too random. Why not give away neat stuff to people who deserve it based on a clear indication of their social skills? That was the idea Jordan Holberg had when he started SHOPULARITY, a unique viral brand promotion platform that awards prizes to SHOPULARITY members based on how many votes they can garner from other SHOPULARITY members, primarily by posting entertaining user generated content on the site. Holberg saw an opportunity to promote brand advocacy for targeted yet coveted products in a fun and engaging way with truly meritocratic contests.

### ENVIRONMENT

- 4 Joyent SmartMachines
- PHP
- Percona MySQL appliance
- New Relic performance monitoring

## The Challenge

Founder Jordan Holberg knew he wanted a cloud-based infrastructure to ensure that his small team did not have to deal with maintaining physical hardware. Beyond that baseline assumption, Holberg wanted a combination of a number of other features.



**Rapid Scalability.** As a viral marketing platform, SHOPULARITY's cloud infrastructure would need to handle massive demand spikes while maintaining fast content and site delivery to ensure continued user engagement.



**Ease of Use and Flexibility.** Holberg and his team wanted a cloud solution that would be easy to set up and install without significant customization. Holberg also wanted the flexibility of a blank canvas to build his application without losing all the benefits of a quasi-hosted environment.



**Longterm Scalability.** Holberg understood that laying an unsound cloud foundation for his venture would lead to big problems down the road as his usage grew. So he needed an affordable infrastructure that could grow with SHOPULARITY over time.



**100% Uptime and Reliability.** Unplanned downtime would not only anger SHOPULARITY contest participants but also compromise the site's reputation with merchants and potential paying brand customers.



**Stellar Support.** SHOPULARITY would be Holberg's first scalable cloud application and he wanted to make sure that the IaaS provider he chose would be responsive to his needs.



**Clear Pricing.** Holberg did not have time to perform complicated cost-analysis of the highly complex pricing structure running on Amazon's EC2 or other cloud providers. He wanted simple pricing and stable expenses.

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“Joyent Cloud support has been phenomenal. They always talk to me at the right level, and they always answer my emails. Joyent Cloud has really helped me save on people costs with this level of support.”

With all the outages the other major cloud providers have had, I don't trust them to run my business, which relies entirely on a timed event. In all of my years with Joyent I have not experienced one outage.

**Jordan Holberg,**  
Founder and Technical Lead,  
SHOPULARITY

## SHOPULARITY

### CUSTOMER PROFILE

**Company:** SHOPULARITY

**Segment:** Social Media

**Location:** US

## The Solution

Holberg had been using the Joyent Cloud for personal cloud computing needs since the company launched in 2004. After conducting a review of the various cloud services offering IaaS, Holberg elected to build SHOPULARITY on the Joyent Cloud. He presently runs SHOPULARITY on four Joyent SmartOS-powered SmartMachines including two ¼ gigabyte machines for staging and development and a single 1 gigabyte machine for Web serving and a one gigabyte SmartMachine for his database. Holberg has built his application on a LAMP stack with PHP and a highly-scalable Percona MySQL appliance that is a standard Joyent offering.



**Rapid and Longterm Scalability.** Holberg loved the ability of the Joyent SmartMachine to scale up to 400% of its capacity without any system modifications to mitigate usage spikes. A discussion with Joyent's engineers gave Holberg a scaling roadmap that would allow him to run SHOPULARITY affordably on high-quality virtual appliances while maintaining the ability to grow his capacity and broaden his architecture seamlessly to massive traffic levels. “Joyent put my database on its own scaling track and the code base and Webservers on another. I can throw a Zeus load-balancer in front of it and set myself up for heavier traffic later. They made it very easy for me to plan for the future without disrupting the present,” says Holberg.



**Personalized Support.** Holberg relied on Joyent Cloud's experienced support engineers to make sure he was not making mistakes in building his apps and to keep them running well after launch. “Joyent Cloud support has been phenomenal. They always talk to me at the right level, and they always answer my emails. They're even willing to jump on a phone call at a moment's notice. It's never hard to get in touch with a real human. Joyent Cloud has really helped me save on people costs with this level of support.”



**Easy Management, Flexibility, Price Clarity.** Holberg examined ease of management with EC2 and Google's App Engine and found that Joyent was a better option. “With EC2, the pricing was so complicated I thought my head would explode,” said Holberg. “With Google App Engine, it's a total black box and you have to write Java. I'm a PHP guy and I wanted to have more control.” For SHOPULARITY, Joyent Cloud hit the sweet spot with clear, simple pricing structures and a flexible development and runtime environment.