



## APPRIVER OUTSOURCES HOSTING TO RACKSPACE® AND KEEPS ITS FOCUS ON BUILDING BUSINESS

**Backed by Rackspace infrastructure and expertise, AppRiver helps protect businesses and keeps them productive.**

The founders of AppRiver had a vision to provide small and medium-sized businesses with the same level of email and Web security solutions available to the Fortune 500. An early cloud-computing pioneer, the company wanted to be in the business of managing and delivering their service, not managing and maintaining the servers supporting the service. They knew that Rackspace could provide the core services needed to support their business model—and that by outsourcing their hosting to Rackspace, they could focus on building their business and supporting their customers.

### THE SITUATION: CAPITALIZING ON AN EMERGING NEED

In 2002, as it was becoming abundantly apparent that the virtual arteries of the Internet would soon be blocked by spam, the founders of AppRiver embarked on an ambitious mission: become a price/performance leader in the email and Web security industry. Its first offering was an affordable service that would filter out spam, mail-borne viruses, Trojan horses, and the like from a customer's incoming mail stream—before it arrived at the company's mail server, let alone an end user's inbox. AppRiver had the expertise to build the filtering applications. The company had the sales and marketing people who could promote the vision, cultivate strong customer relationships, and sell the services. What it did not have was a data center or an operations team that could provide uninterrupted network connectivity, server integrity, and rapid response to service requests on an around-the-clock basis.

What AppRiver's founders wanted was to deliver enterprise-quality managed services to all businesses, regardless of size – and to outsource those aspects of the business that fell outside this goal. Rather than hiring and training a staff to maintain a data center on a 24x7 basis, AppRiver founders wanted to focus on hiring experts in spam and virus analytics and build a core technical support team.

The question for AppRiver's founders was never whether to outsource the day-to-day tasks of administering and maintaining a data center. They knew they could not operate a data center with the same level of efficiency as a hosting service provider. Attempting to do so would simply increase the cost of delivering the service, which would go against the core price/performance business model. The question was which service provider they could trust to deliver the level of availability, service, and support that the AppRiver business model required.

"I knew from previous experience that Rackspace always shows up on the compilations of well-regarded, trusted service providers," says Joel Smith, an AppRiver cofounder and its Chief Technical Officer (CTO). "So we decided to give them a try."

### THE SOLUTION: ABILITY TO FOCUS LEADS TO RAPID GROWTH

AppRiver's array of managed (SaaS) services are relatively simple to launch. For example, when a customer subscribes to its SecureTide anti-spam service, AppRiver begins to intercept all mail bound

for the customer's mail server. AppRiver's proprietary system scans all the inbound mail for traces of spam and viruses, and then passes all the uninfected, non-spam messages to the customer's mail server, where they are distributed to the appropriate end-user inboxes.

What is simple conceptually, however, can be complicated to execute. AppRiver and Rackspace worked together closely to create a precise server configuration to best support this activity. "I had the solution all figured out when I first met with Rackspace," says Smith, "but after running the software for a while and seeing how it was working, we realized we needed to make some changes. Rackspace worked closely with us to develop the server configuration that was just right for our needs."

Initially, AppRiver required only a few servers, now known as AppRiver Specials, to support its service. AppRiver has since added Web-security, email encryption, email continuity, and Hosted Microsoft Exchange to its product lineup. Expanded service offerings and rapid customer growth now requires well over 1000 AppRiver Specials to deliver its service. On any given day, AppRiver's systems filter

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"The proactive approach that Rackspace takes to managing our servers is an incredible benefit."

Joel Smith, CTO

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### AT-A-GLANCE

**CUSTOMER'S BUSINESS:** Enterprise Email and Web Security SaaS Provider

**CHALLENGES:** Keep operating costs low; Focus on core business; Network uptime

**RACKSPACE SOLUTION:** Dedicated servers; Dedicated network gear; F5 Load Balancers; Advanced monitoring

**BUSINESS OUTCOME:** Continued growth with low operating costs

“By outsourcing our infrastructure to Rackspace, we are able to meet the needs of our continually increasing customer base without changing our cost structure or sacrificing performance.”

**Michael Murdoch**, President and CEO

more than a billion mail messages for more than 45,000 corporate customers around the world.

“The growth of AppRiver has been exciting to watch,” says Graham Weston, Chairman of Rackspace. “Early on, the founders realized the price and performance benefits of outsourcing non-strategic areas of their business. It was important for them to focus on their core competencies and put their infrastructure in the hands of a trusted hosting provider. By trusting Rackspace to manage the infrastructure, AppRiver had time to develop the heart of their company: unyielding performance and quality customer support. Their model is enabling them to carve out a leadership position in the email and Web security market.”

### **APPRIVER'S EMAIL AND WEB SECURITY SERVICES**

#### *SecureTide: Safeguarding Business Email*

AppRiver's SecureTide email security system relies on the interaction of several integrated proprietary applications. Its virus detection engine was developed internally, but it works with a variety of virus signature descriptors. It relies on five different virus signature lists because each security vendor updates its virus signature lists at different times—and a new signature may appear on one list hours or even days before it appears on another. By relying on five separate lists, AppRiver increases the likelihood that it will be able to protect its clients well in advance of any major virus outbreaks.

Similarly, AppRiver's spam detection engine is internally built and relies on more than 60 types of spam filtering techniques—so it quickly stymies the efforts of spammers. Moreover, because AppRiver is scanning so much mail for so many clients, its systems are quick to detect new spam campaigns. “We can write a signature within a few minutes to block mail from spammers,” says Smith.

#### *SecureSurf: Web Protection Service*

In recent years, the threat of cybercrime has evolved and expanded to the Web. As the threat has spread, AppRiver has evolved its expertise in protecting business networks and data. They recently launched SecureSurf, a Web protection service featuring a DNS-plus-proxy system based on AppRiver's considerable experience in identifying and defeating Web-based threats through its SecureTide service. With a database of more than 5 billion sites known to distribute malware, SecureSurf keeps company employees from inadvertently stumbling onto malicious or offensive sites. It can also enforce company usage policies down to the workstation level.

### **NONSTOP SUPPORT FOR NONSTOP BUSINESSES**

Spam and malware never sleep – neither do the filtering systems at AppRiver. For that reason, AppRiver executives knew they would need a service provider that could provide uninterrupted network and server

availability. Rackspace has met AppRiver's needs in this area helping the company achieve a nine-year history of 100% availability and supplying open access to the expertise and passion of the Fanatical Support® team.

### **DESIGNING THE SOLUTION THAT MEETS CUSTOMER NEEDS**

“Their proactive approach to managing our multitude of servers is an incredible benefit,” says Smith. “They were very helpful when it came to creating our AppRiver Specials, and they've helped us in other areas, too. We required an upscale routing and load-balancing configuration for our service. Over the course of two weeks, Rackspace worked closely with F5 Networks and with us to produce the configuration that met this essential need.”

### **ENABLING RAPID BUSINESS EXPANSION**

For AppRiver, one of the biggest benefits of outsourcing its infrastructure to Rackspace is the fact that it allows AppRiver to convert a high percentage of its efforts directly into customer value. “It's important for us to squeeze as much performance as possible out of every dollar our clients exchange for our service,” says Michael Murdoch, AppRiver's President and CEO. “Our relationship with Rackspace has enabled us to increase the support and service we offer our clients without scaling up our costs. We have grown more quickly than expected, which is never a complaint but can be difficult to manage. By outsourcing our infrastructure to Rackspace, we are able to meet the needs of our continually increasing customer base without changing our cost structure or sacrificing performance.”

“Having Rackspace in the picture takes an incredible factor off the table,” says Smith, “As we grow, we don't have to think about things like power consumption or battery backups—all the details that we'd have to factor into the equation if we were trying to expand our business while managing all these systems ourselves. All we have to do is concentrate on our applications, making them better than ever to suit our customers—we know Rackspace is going to hold up their end of the bargain.” And if they run into issues or need advice, the Rackspace team is available. “We work with customers in many time zones, and it's important that we're able to support them 24x7. We can call Rackspace at 2 A.M. on Christmas morning—which happened once—and they're there,” Smith shares.

For AppRiver, the logic of working with Rackspace remains, even after nine years, irrefutable. “If you really like experimenting with your own equipment, taking servers down and putting them back up, good for you,” says Smith. “But if you want to stay focused, hand all that off to Rackspace and be done with it. It would take millions of dollars and years of personnel time to create what Rackspace has already done, so why not just hop on that bandwagon and do it?”

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