



LoveBook Uses Managed Cloud to Handle Big Traffic

The online retailer manages major traffic spikes using the Rackspace® portfolio of products.

LoveBook Online, based in Royal Oak, Michigan, creates personalized gift books that let its customers list all the reasons they love someone. Customers choose the reasons from ready-made pages or edit their own from scratch. LoveBook prints, binds, and ships the custom-designed books anywhere in the world.

When LoveBook appeared on a nationally broadcast morning television show last year, their site was hosted with a different hosting company. The spike in traffic due to the appearance crashed their server, preventing some potential customers from accessing the site. "There we were, getting national attention, and our servers couldn't handle the traffic coming to the site," says Chris Sonjeow, Co-founder of LoveBook. "We ran out of connections, so we didn't get as many people in there as we could have. We immediately thought, 'We need to find someone who's going to help us do this.'"

"That's when we made a vow never to have our servers crash again," CTO and co-founder Kevin Zalewski says. "And Rackspace was there to help us out."

FINDING A FLEXIBLE SOLUTION

LoveBook chose a then-new offering: Rackspace Cloud Servers with a managed service level, also referred to as Managed Cloud. "They got us going, and were with us every step of the way, helping us with everything we needed through the entire process," says Sonjeow. "It was excellent service."

LoveBook's products are popular gifts during the holidays, causing seasonal fluctuations in their traffic. Because of this highly variable traffic, they appreciate that Rackspace enables them to scale, clone, and add servers at a moment's notice. "We like to be able to scale up during the holiday season and make sure that user experience isn't

AT-A-GLANCE

CUSTOMER'S BUSINESS:

Ecommerce retailer of personalized gift books

CHALLENGES:

Very spiky traffic due to national media attention and seasonality; storing and serving up large amounts of user-generated content

RACKSPACE SOLUTION:

Cloud Servers with a managed service level, Cloud Files, Cloud Load Balancers, Rackspace Email, and Rackspace Hosted SharePoint

BUSINESS OUTCOME:

Handled big traffic with ease; served lots of content; streamlined product development powered by the Rackspace Cloud; enjoyed great support when they needed it most

affected by the rush of people that come in," says Zalewski. "We love the ability to turn servers on and off when we need to, and make it happen within minutes." CIO and co-founder John Baranowski adds, "This helps keep our costs down, allowing us to only pay for what we need at that time. That's an ideal business model for us."

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John Baranowski,
Co-founder, LoveBook Online

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In addition to Managed Cloud, LoveBook uses Cloud Files, Cloud Load Balancers, Rackspace Email, and Rackspace Hosted SharePoint. “It’s been a great integration and a great help to our business model,” says Zalewski.

LoveBook has since moved into a multi-tiered Cloud Server configuration, using Cloud Servers for their web and database servers working in concert with Cloud Load Balancers. Additionally, LoveBook has found success using Cloud Files to store large amounts of user-generated content, which can be easily served over the Akamai-powered CDN. “User-generated content is a very challenging problem to solve,” says Baranowski. “Rackspace Cloud Files allowed us to create an environment where our user-generated content could be stored ‘on the fly’, allowing each web head to share that content.”

READY FOR ANYTHING WITH MANAGED CLOUD

The next time LoveBook had a big national audience was the following Valentine’s Day, when another nationally-broadcast morning show came calling. This time, LoveBook was hosted on Rackspace. The site ran without a hitch, serving thousands of concurrent customers with ease.

Rackspace Cloud Load Balancers allowed LoveBook to balance the traffic to their databases from each web head in the system. This balanced the load on the database servers and gave the company greater database performance for their site. “Cloud Load Balancers provide LoveBook with high availability of our data to help achieve zero downtime,” explains Sonjeow.

“We believe that we have built a perfect blend of performance and flexibility that should service us for quite a while,” he says.

BACKED BY A “SWARM” OF SUPPORT

Now that LoveBook has gone international, Fanatical Support® and Rackspace’s high-performing environment provide LoveBook customers consistent access to their site. “Fanatical Support means that if we’re having an office party

on a Friday night, and something goes wrong and we don’t know why, we just make a quick phone call, and within minutes we’re back up and running without losing any customers,” says Zalewski.

“It’s a swarm of tech support,” Sonjeow jokes, “that attacks when we put in a trouble ticket. The support is there immediately, even on a Friday night.”

Baranowski agrees. “Your Managed Cloud team has been great for us,” he says. “It’s exactly the blend of support we were looking for. When I call our support team at Rackspace, I feel as if they are working with me, not just for me. They take their support very personally. There is no question in my mind that they love what they do.”

COST-EFFECTIVE SCALING SUPPORTS COMPANY GROWTH

Would LoveBook recommend Rackspace to other growing companies? “Absolutely,” says Zalewski. “As a startup, the service that we get is a huge, huge benefit to us.” Baranowski adds, “The trick was to design up front a system that handles our current traffic needs, and can be scaled into something much more as our traffic grows. Rackspace Cloud technology is the only way to go to be able to accomplish this cost-effectively.”

“Before Cloud—what I think of as ‘BC’—we used to have to figure out ahead of time what hardware we needed to run on and estimate future growth,” says Sonjeow. “In the past we looked at our computer technology as capital expenditure, but by utilizing your cloud environment, it just becomes operational cost.”

Baranowski says that LoveBook has had such a good experience with Rackspace that they now develop their products with the Rackspace Cloud in mind. “From all that we learned launching LoveBook Online, we now develop all our products with cloud in mind, knowing the Rackspace Cloud facilitates our ability to launch those products faster than ever.”

Check out LoveBook at LoveBookOnline.com

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