



## SEER INTERACTIVE FINDS SUCCESS WITH MANAGED CLOUD SERVERS™

**The search marketing company saves time and money by moving from a dedicated server**

### THE COMPANY

Seer Interactive is a search engine marketing and search engine optimization consultancy, based in Philadelphia. Since 2002, Seer has been helping clients including Intuit, Crayola, and Wine Enthusiast improve their sites' search rankings. The company has grown quickly since then, and now counts almost 30 employees.

Seer has been a Rackspace® customer since 2008, and in that time, had always used a dedicated server. The company has an IT staff of one: Chris Le, lead developer.

"We were totally on dedicated servers," says Le. "We had a single dedicated server that contained our site, and a bunch of internal apps we were running. The basic problem was that it was way overloaded, and we needed room to expand."

"The internal app I built for us pulls in two million rows of data—it holds all of our marketing data—and that was causing strain on the server," explains Le. "Google is starting to pay attention to

page speed, and we saw that our website was loading slower and slower. I looked into just adding another dedicated server, but our bill would have doubled. That's when I started looking into the cloud."

### A CLOUD WITH SIMPLICITY AND SUPPORT

"I tested out other clouds, like Amazon's," says Le. "It was fairly cheap, but I had two major concerns. First, it was fairly complicated to get the thing running, and when you finally get it set up, there are way too many options. I just wanted to get my app running."

"After trying Amazon, I can tell you, Rackspace is a heck of a lot simpler," says Le. "All the options at Amazon ran off the page—I couldn't even find what I was looking for. At Rackspace, the setup was so much simpler. It was easy to pick the exact sizes and flavors I wanted."

Le's second concern with Amazon was support. "I could email them, but there was no indication of

how long it would be before they responded. What if my server falls over? There wasn't anyone I could just call."

"That was a big deal for me," says Le. "I'm the only IT guy: I handle all 30 workstations, all the apps, our website, and tech questions from our customers. A buddy of mine works at another company that uses the Rackspace Cloud, and he said, 'It's great, it's easy—just get it.'"

Le remembers what happened next. "Then Rackspace called me and said, 'Do you want to try

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**Chris Le**, Lead Developer, Seer Interactive

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### AT-A-GLANCE

#### CUSTOMERS BUSINESS:

Search engine marketing and SEO consulting

#### CHALLENGES:

An IT staff of one; an ever-growing need for more servers

#### RACKSPACE SOLUTION:

Cloud Servers with a managed service level, Cloud Servers for production, Cloud Files, SendGrid for transactional emails

#### BUSINESS OUTCOME:

Twice the computing power for less money; the developer is freed to build applications

"Managed cloud really allows us to focus specifically on our app, and not all the IT stuff around it. Not that we can't do it, but I have code to write."

**Chris Le**, Lead Developer, Seer Interactive

the beta migration to move over to Cloud? We'll help you move from your dedicated server to the cloud, and yes, we have managed support, 24/7. Call anytime, or submit a ticket.' It was perfect timing, and it was exactly what I was looking for."

## AN "AWESOME" MIGRATION

Le had a few specific needs in mind for the migration. "I desperately needed to separate our main site from our internal apps. A Racker named Chris helped me separate the two. So now I have two cloud machines running, which I can scale up separately."

"Chris also recommended which image I needed to use," says Le. "He said, 'Start here. If your site goes nuts, scale it up, with the touch of a button.' He copied my entire WordPress site, and he configured my site for me. I gave him a couple of guidelines, and he just did it. It was awesome."

"For the application server, he configured it so the baseline stuff was already there: Git, Apache, Ruby on Rails, etc.," says Le. "That gave me a great framework to work from. Then I was just able to drop my application on it, bundle up my gems, configure a few things, and then my application was running."

"He actually gave me some tips I didn't even know," adds Le. "This was stuff specific to SEO—it had nothing to do with Cloud Servers—and he was teaching me some stuff along the way. He just did the entire process, and fixed another problem I was having while he was at it."

The simplicity of migration was a major selling point for Le. "I could have done all that myself, but to have him do that for me freed me up to do work stuff. Because I'm the only IT guy, that was a huge thing for me. He just emailed me with a password and said, 'Check it out.' It was fantastic."

For Le, migrating to the Cloud was straightforward and effective. "In one week, I had everything moved over to the Rackspace Cloud, and you guys had me totally set up. A week after that, I turned off my Amazon account, which we'd been using to host a small part of our internal app—that's now on the managed cloud. Two weeks after that, I turned off our Rackspace dedicated server. Considering all the other things I have on my plate, that's fast."

## MONEY SAVED, AND A BETTER NIGHT'S SLEEP

Seer Interactive has settled in nicely on the Cloud. "We've been on managed cloud for a few months now, and I love it," says Le. "We're using the Managed Backup feature, and that's been really handy."

"I absolutely sleep better since using the managed cloud," says Le. "I remember one day there were all these emails in my inbox, saying our site is down, but it was already back up. I went 'Oh no!'; but the emails were telling me that it was already fixed. I noticed it hours later when I read the email thread."

Seer Interactive uses a number of products from the Rackspace portfolio. "I like having everything on Rackspace," says Le. "We have two managed Cloud Servers—both are for production, and we use Cloud Files, too. I'd like to add another Cloud Server for development. We also use SendGrid to send out emails from our Cloud Servers, so now I don't have to worry about email notifications bouncing, either."

The outcome for Seer Interactive has been a very positive. "We're spending a little less than we were before with our dedicated server," says Le. "And by moving to the Cloud, we're getting twice as much computing out of it."

"With our two Cloud Servers, we have far more computing power than we did before, and blazing fast speeds, and our servers aren't even close to being stressed out," says Le. "I know I'll need more, but now I can just click and turn on another server. That's so much simpler than having to go get another dedicated box."

By now, Le is hooked on the Rackspace Cloud. "I'm really excited to mess around more with the Rackspace Cloud API. And right after we migrated Seer to the Cloud, I purchased a Cloud Server for myself, just for my own personal use."

Would Le recommend the Rackspace Cloud to others? "Absolutely," he says. "If someone really just needs to get their app up and running, and they want to get on the cloud, they need to focus on their app instead of all the technical stuff. It's so much easier to get things done with Rackspace. If you want to be Netflix, sure, use Amazon. But I'm not Netflix. Amazon's good if you like buttons and knobs. You want buttons and knobs, then Amazon's your thing. You have apps to write? Go with Rackspace."

"I've already recommended the Rackspace Cloud to a client who was trying to figure out what to do with his site," says Le. "I said, 'Believe me: I love it, and it's great.'"

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RACKSPACE® HOSTING | 5000 WALZEM ROAD | SAN ANTONIO, TX 78218 U.S.A.

