Cloud-based architectures help Discovery Networks International plan for growth and changing business needs.
Discovery Networks International (DNI) wanted a more scalable, flexible and cost effective hosting solution without compromising on security and availability. Accenture analyzed DNI's online architecture and assessed the suitability of migrating its entire portfolio to Amazon Web Services (AWS) platform. Then DNI tasked Accenture with managing the application migration, AWS environment configuration and production deployments—all based upon Accenture's proposed cloud architecture blueprint. With its new cloud hosting capability, DNI now enjoys decreased costs, increased agility, granular scaling and reduced future capital outlay.
Operating one of the most extensive international television businesses in the media industry, Discovery Networks International (DNI) delivers quality content designed to inform, entertain and inspire the world. Reaching over 1.6 billion cumulative subscribers in over 220 countries and territories, DNI distributes 46 international brands and employs an extensive localization strategy by offering customized schedules and programming in 45 languages worldwide via 245 feeds.

Spanning six continents, DNI has 59 international offices with regional headquarters located in London, Warsaw, Singapore and Miami. DNI is also the top provider of HD services in over 189 markets.

Business Challenge

DNI’s digital platform produces consumer-facing online destinations to provide video content, supported by brand and show information and interactive features (e.g. games, quizzes, polls). DNI wanted a more scalable, flexible and cost effective hosting solution without compromising on security and availability. Due to continuous site launches, DNI was fast approaching capacity with its existing data center provider. This resulted in a number of unplanned outages, which were not severely damaging, but created concern for the business. Finally, DNI found that latency in making infrastructure changes often hindered project delivery. Requests for additional storage or firewall access often took weeks to complete.
How Accenture Helped

DNI engaged Accenture to carry out an analysis of its online architecture and assess the suitability of migrating its entire portfolio to the Amazon Web Services (AWS) platform. A small team worked for fourteen weeks to implement the move to AWS.

The team:

1. Ran a full appraisal of current infrastructure;

2. Developed a plan for the move to AWS;

3. Carried out the necessary development work and content migration; and

4. Tested the system.

The analysis highlighted a number of key benefits to the move and, thus, DNI tasked Accenture with managing the application migration, AWS environment configuration and production deployments—all based upon Accenture’s proposed cloud architecture blueprint for DNI. Benefits included:

1. Web capacity (and therefore capital expenditure) reflected demand, rather than needing to invest in expensive, fixed capital infrastructure.

2. Upgraded infrastructure makes deployments more efficient, particularly for producing large numbers of sites. Accenture’s infrastructure changes also provide a separate isolated environment for third party agents.

3. A large cost reduction in increased flexibility, allowing DNI to modify and build new sites at short notice.

4. Ability to take advantage of cloud-based technologies beyond just the AWS environment, such as queuing mechanisms, autoscaling (to meet peaks in traffic) and the ability to spin up new environments quickly.
High Performance Delivered

Cloud computing allows executives to better respond to changing business needs and create new services—with the added benefit of not being bound by a physical location. Due to their experience with hosting and storage, the Accenture's Cloud Team knew how to take advantage of this to help guide DNI through the migration.

Afterwards, DNI benefited from its new cloud hosting capability in the following ways:

Cost
DNI is on track to reduce its monthly operational hosting bill by 73 percent.

Agility
A cloud-based architecture gave DNI the ability to launch new, value added services without the latency that infrastructure management and provisioning previously caused. Changes to infrastructure which used to take weeks can now be implemented in hours or days. DNI’s content producers can build a basic site in a single day.

Granular Scaling Capability
When analyzing traffic patterns within the existing architecture, it became clear that there was a large fluctuation in traffic within any 24-hour period. Therefore, Accenture implemented a fully elastic cloud architecture, which allowed DNI’s infrastructure to grow as demand increases throughout any given 24-hour period.

Reduction in Future Capital Outlay
Given the increased popularity and complexity of its online offerings, DNI had planned to increase its data center capacity. However, following the migration, the need for this large capital expenditure was removed, as cloud capacity automatically responds to demand without needing to invest in capital expenditure.

The project's primary success factor lay within Accenture's ability to quickly bring together a truly cross-skilled mix of talent from both the Accenture's Digital practice and the Accenture Cloud team to deliver the project effectively and transform DNI's infrastructure hosting and storage set-up for overall cost savings, agility and improved capability.
Company Overview

Reaching over 1.6 billion cumulative subscribers in over 220 countries and territories, DNI distributes 46 international brands and employs an extensive localization strategy by offering customized schedules and programming in 45 languages world via 245 feeds.

Business Challenge

• DNI had been experiencing a number of difficulties with its infrastructure hosting and storage need set-up.
• Due to continually launching new sites, DNI was fast approaching capacity in its existing data center provider.
• Additionally, DNI operated out of a single data center with no disaster recovery capability.
• Finally, DNI found that latency in making infrastructure changes often hindered project delivery.

Why Accenture

• Accenture had been providing functional and technical services to DNI’s Digital Media department for the past six years.
• DNI had come to view Accenture as a trusted technology ally, which allowed them to proactively raise the potential benefits of cloud computing and how they could help address the hosting and storage issues it was facing.

Engagement Scope

• Managing the application migration, Amazon Web Services (AWS) environment configuration and production deployments—all based upon Accenture’s proposed cloud architecture blueprint.

Services Provided

• Proposed cloud architecture blueprint
• Online architecture assessment
• Application migration
• AWS environment configuration
• Production deployments

Staffing/ Delivery Centers

• Entirely onshore, UK Based—mix of consulting and solutions.

Technology Components

• Cloud
• Amazon Web Services

Assets Leveraged

• Cloud
• Digital Practice

How Accenture Helped

• Carried out an analysis of DNI’s online architecture and assess the suitability of migrating its entire portfolio to Amazon.com’s Web Services (AWS) platform.
• The analysis highlighted a number of key benefits to the move and, thus, DNI tasked Accenture with managing the application migration, AWS environment configuration and production deployments—all based upon proposed cloud architecture blueprint.

High Performance Delivered

• Cost: DNI is on track to reduce its monthly operational hosting bill by 73 percent
• Agility: A cloud based architecture has given DNI the ability to launch new, value added services without the latency that infrastructure management and provisioning previously caused
• Granular Scaling Capability: Accenture implemented a fully elastic cloud architecture, which allowed DNI’s infrastructure to grow as demand increases throughout any given 24 hour period
• Reduction in Future Capital Outlay: Given the increased popularity and complexity of its online offerings, DNI had planned to increase its data center capacity, but, following the migration, the need for this large capital expenditure was removed

Key Success Factors

• Accenture’s ability to quickly bring together a truly cross-skilled mix of talent from both the Digital practice and Cloud Computing group to deliver the project effectively
• Proposed cloud architecture blueprint
• Six-year trusted relationship with client as a technology ally
• Amazon Web Services (AWS) Platform
About Accenture

Accenture is a global management consulting, technology services and outsourcing company, with approximately 289,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries. Combining unparalleled experience, comprehensive capabilities across all industries and business functions, and extensive research on the world’s most successful companies, Accenture collaborates with clients to help them become high-performance businesses and governments. The company generated net revenues of US$28.6 billion for the fiscal year ended Aug. 31, 2013. Its home page is www.accenture.com.