

Google App Engine Makes the Cloud a Safer Place for Customers of CloudLock



At a Glance

What they wanted to do

- Build an application for securing Google Apps data that would scale easily to accommodate user growth
- Ensure a high level of security by keeping data within Google's infrastructure
- Manage the app with minimal staff resources

What they did

- Chose Google App Engine to leverage Google's highly secure, reliable infrastructure
- Took advantage of key App Engine features, such as the Datastore to accommodate growth in user data and OpenID/Single Sign-On to allow secure access to CloudLock's service through existing Google accounts
- Monitored performance and reviewed error logs through the intuitive administration console

What they accomplished

- Achieved a 20-fold increase in users within a year
- Saved nearly \$200,000 per year in salary costs
- Supported more than 200 customers with a single staff member

Organization

CloudLock enables Google Apps customers to extend their enterprise data security and compliance practices to the cloud with a content-aware security suite for Google Docs, Sites and Google+. The company turned to Google App Engine for the scalability it required to manage rapid growth. Google App Engine also provides the Waltham, Mass.-based startup with the security it needs to keep its customer data safe and the ease of use to manage its service with minimal resources.

Challenge

CloudLock launched in 2008 to help businesses secure their on-premise systems. Two years later, the startup spotted an opportunity with the increasing number of companies using Google Apps for Business tools, such as Google Docs and Google Sites, to collaborate and to store documents.

"Many companies need to comply with federal regulations or have internal security policies, which can become more challenging when data moves into the cloud," explains Ron Zalkind, CloudLock's Co-founder and Chief Technology Officer. "We wanted to help these companies gain more visibility into and control over this data – to see who can access it and how it's being shared, and to ensure that sensitive data doesn't leak."

CloudLock initially built its on-premise security solution using Amazon Web Services, but Zalkind preferred to keep customer data in Google's infrastructure to help improve security. He also liked Google App Engine's ability to scale automatically to accommodate user growth, making App Engine the obvious choice.

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—Ron Zalkind, Co-founder and Chief Technology Officer, CloudLock

Solution

Zalkind and his team began using Google App Engine in February 2011. They built the application in two months and relied on a number of App Engine features to improve their service, including:

- App Engine's Datastore to effortlessly scale to accommodate growing amounts of user data

About Google App Engine

Google App Engine enables businesses to build and host web apps on the same systems that power Google applications. It offers fast development and deployment, effortless scalability and simple administration, with no need to worry about hardware, patches or backups.

For more information, visit
www.google.com/enterprise/appengine/

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—Ron Zalkind, Co-founder and Chief Technology Officer, CloudLock

- Task queues to enable offline processing, which allows the application to continuously analyze large amounts of data
- OpenID/Single Sign-On to provide users with secure access to the CloudLock service through their Google accounts
- Administration console to monitor performance, review error logs and test new application versions before they go live

Building the app on Google’s infrastructure eliminated worries about meeting growing demand and data storage requirements. “We instantly gained the scalability we needed to be able to serve the largest companies,” Zalkind says. “This allowed us to focus on developing our service.”

Because Google’s infrastructure is compliant with international auditing standards – such as SSAE 16 Type II, a benchmark for companies facing security and privacy regulations – Zalkind knows it’s a solid base for the CloudLock service.

“Using Google App Engine helps us achieve high security standards,” he says. “It resonates with companies that are considering cloud-based platforms for hosting their own applications.”

Results

CloudLock’s paying customer base has grown from 10, when the company started using Google App Engine, to more than 200 today, with over 1,000,000 end-users under management. It counts the London-based Guardian News & Media, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and The First Church of Christ, Scientist, among its customers. Being able to sell on top of Google’s reputation for security and reliability has been integral to the app’s success.

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Zalkind estimates that using Google App Engine saves his company close to \$200,000 each year in salary costs. The service has allowed the CloudLock team to manage its product with minimal resources, even as its user base grows. Just one staff member supports the company’s entire customer base.

“Google App Engine gives us the ability to test, deploy and manage a high-quality solution,” Zalkind says. “As a small company, we’re able to support large customers and meet their data security needs in a way that’s robust and predictable.”

