

App Developer Raises the Bar with Google App Engine



At a Glance

What they wanted to do

- Develop a robust, scalable application to enable lawyers to manage their practice anywhere, anytime
- Avoid buying additional servers and hiring staff to maintain them
- Easily add new features to improve user experience

What they did

- Chose Google App Engine to take advantage of Google's highly scalable, reliable infrastructure
- Integrated features such as the High-Replication Datastore and the Users Java API to provide secure storage and to easily authenticate users
- Continually added new features through one-click deployment

What they accomplished

- Created a richly featured, dependable application with minimal upfront investment
- Saved more than \$130,000 per year on infrastructure and staffing costs, while supporting a rapidly growing user base
- Allowed lawyers to feel confident that their information and clients' information is highly secure in Google-managed data centers

Organization

The Cloud Gate, a developer of internet and mobile applications, used Google App Engine to create nubbius, a secure, sophisticated software-as-a-service offering for lawyers to manage their cases, contacts, appointments, documents and expenses from any location and on any device. Running the app on Google App Engine is helping the company handle growing demand while letting it save hundreds of thousands of dollars in infrastructure.

Challenge

Ignacio Zafra knew when he founded his company that buying servers and managing growth in the user base would take time away from developing the new application.

"We wanted to focus on what we do best, which is creating compelling web user experiences," says Zafra, who also serves as director of the Granada, Spain, startup. "Dealing with infrastructure expenses and maintaining machines would detract from our goal, which was to offer a high-quality, cost-effective service for lawyers."

Zafra and his team had a clear idea of what they wanted to build, but needed to be able to refine it easily as users provided feedback. They also needed the platform to be dependable and secure.

Solution

The team investigated Google App Engine and decided it was the right platform to bring their idea to life. Running the service on Google's scalable, reliable infrastructure gave them confidence that the service could support a growing number of users, while the pay-as-you-go pricing would help control costs. They were also pleased that Google adheres to the U.S.-E.U. Safe Harbor Agreement, which ensures strong privacy protections for their Spanish customers' data.

"Without App Engine, we would have to spend time raising money for infrastructure. App Engine allowed us to quickly build a great product that was ready for any number of users from day one."
 —Ignacio Zafra, founder and director, The Cloud Gate

The Cloud Gate's developers took advantage of several App Engine features to improve their application, including:

- **Multitenancy API** to serve the same app to multiple customers, permitting them to add new users easily

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
<http://cloud.google.com/appengine>

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*—Ignacio Zafra, founder and director,
The Cloud Gate*

- **High-Replication Datastore** for scalable, long-term storage of case information, contacts, time reporting and expenses
- **Users Java API** to authenticate users with their Google Apps for Business usernames and passwords, simplifying log-ins and enhancing security
- **Search API** to make it easier for users to locate emails, documents and other files

The nubbius service, which launched in September 2011, integrates seamlessly with Google Apps. Users can store documents securely in Google Drive, schedule appointments with Google Calendar, generate invoices through Google Spreadsheets and organize emails by case with the help of a Gmail gadget. Zafra and his team can quickly refine the application since they are able to test new versions on App Engine's servers and take them live with one click.

"We love how easy it is to add features with Google App Engine," Zafra says. "It makes us responsive to users and helps us continuously improve our service."

Results

Zafra and his team built a richly featured application on Google App Engine with minimal upfront investment. Zafra estimates the platform is saving the company more than \$130,000 a year, since he has avoided buying servers and hiring additional staff to maintain them. For the small startup, these savings are significant.

"Without App Engine, we would have to spend time raising money for infrastructure," he says. "App Engine allowed us to quickly build a great product that was ready for any number of users from day one."

Users have never experienced downtime since the service went live. Zafra knows Google's scalable infrastructure will allow his company to continue to deliver top-notch performance no matter how much his business grows.

"The performance that App Engine has given us has surpassed our expectations," he says. "Using it gives us great confidence, and we're able to pass that confidence on to our customers."

