

AT-A-GLANCE

CUSTOMER'S BUSINESS: Streaming online music, curated and mixed by DJs

CHALLENGES: Reliable and affordable computing, storage, and streaming

RACKSPACE SOLUTION: Cloud Servers for production, databases, and development; Cloud Files with CDN for streaming

BUSINESS OUTCOME: Growing fast and successfully streaming up to 2TB of data month



DUBSET USES THE RACKSPACE® CLOUD TO POWER ITS RICH MEDIA SITE

Cloud Servers™ and Cloud Files™ make it easy and inexpensive for the fast-growing business to scale quickly

THE COMPANY

Dubset is the next generation of internet radio, curated by the world's top DJs. Users can discover new music recorded live at premier clubs and exclusive events, find and follow new DJs, and create their own custom channels.

The Brooklyn-based company is growing fast. Dubset aligns incentives between DJs, recording artists and music fans. The company uses a patent-pending technology called MixSCAN to fingerprint mixes uploaded to Dubset.com—enabling them to accurately monitor music found within mixes, compensate artists and copyright holders for use of their content, and make individual tracks available for download.

"All of these music startups out there try to outsource your playlist to an algorithm," says Charlie Robbins, Technology Director at Dubset. "But we've

crowdsourced it to real people—DJs. It's going to be challenging for a computer to ever get that good."

STREAMING MEDIA VIA CLOUD FILES AND THE CDN POWERED BY AKAMAI

Because Dubset's business is streaming music, they needed a hosting solution that could easily scale up, and that wouldn't cost them enormous bandwidth charges. Rackspace Cloud Files was the ideal solution.

"We use a lot of Cloud Files, because we're streaming to CDN," says Robbins. "We were on Slicehost for a while, literally serving this stuff off the disk. But our traffic got to a point where we couldn't even backup the servers on Slicehost, because it was too big. If you get above 50GB or so, it becomes a network storage issue."

So Robbins and his team moved their data onto Rackspace Cloud Files. "Cloud Files works great," says Robbins. "It's really simple, and it's cheap. We're streaming 1.5-2TB a month—a huge amount of data. With Cloud Files, we don't have to worry about it, it just works."

Cloud Files' CDN powered by Akamai is a major advantage for Dubset, says

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Charlie Robbins, Technology Director, Dubset

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“It makes sense for the company I’m getting hosting from to have hosting as their primary business.”

Charlie Robbins, Technology Director, Dubset

Robbins. “Most of our traffic is on CDN. By using Cloud Files, we’ve offloaded a ton of the work that used to be done by the server onto the CDN.”

WHAT THEY NEEDED: FLEXIBILITY AND COMPUTING POWER

“I’ve been using the Rackspace Cloud for almost three years now,” says Robbins. “I was a Slicehost user, and followed the acquisition by Rackspace closely.”

For Robbins, the options allowed by the Rackspace Cloud were a major selling point. “One thing about the Rackspace Cloud that I like is you can get really small slices,” he says. “Other providers have sizes that are too big for a lot of applications. If you want to take full advantage of virtual servers, you want to have ones that are small enough for low traffic sites.”

“When you’re developing, most of the time you want to turn on a server and leave it on, especially in dev mode,” explains Robbins. “You’re just testing; it’s not live traffic. If you need five servers, why spin up five full-size servers elsewhere for \$75 for a month, when you could spin up five Rackspace servers for \$10 a month?”

Robbins also appreciates the reliability he has found with Rackspace: “We’re a platform built on Rackspace. We had 100 percent uptime last year.”

A STRAIGHTFORWARD — AND POWERFUL — ARCHITECTURE

Dubset’s network architecture is relatively straightforward. They use about ten Cloud Servers, including a Ruby on Rails front-end server, a MySQL database server, two Node.js servers running MixSCAN (a RESTful job-based API), and two CouchDB servers in replication. The rest of their servers are used for development.

“We run MixSCAN in both production and development with separate databases in the same CouchDB,” explains Robbins. “Interestingly, because of one of our software

vendors we have to run two different operating systems: both CentOS and Ubuntu. Cloud Servers made the setup of a default CentOS image painless, even though none of our dev team had ever used it before.”

For Robbins, the attraction of the Rackspace Cloud was both the Cloud Servers and Cloud Files API. “They are modern, RESTful, JSON-based APIs that are easy to work with.”

Furthermore, says Robbins, “Creating images is super easy on the Rackspace Cloud. To backup Cloud Servers, I can literally make that call for the Rackspace API—that whatever’s on this machine right now, that’s an image. That goes in Cloud Files, and it’s really easy and friction-free. That’s far more appealing than the process for creating images on other hosting providers.”

THE DIFFERENCE IS FANATICAL SUPPORT

Though their business has grown, Dubset’s choice for hosting continues to be Rackspace. “It’s the support, really,” explains Robbins. “There are times when I’m in the chat pretty regularly; the guys in there know me. I’ve heard nightmares from people about other providers’ support, which can be self-service to a fault.”

As Dubset grows, they’ll consider using dedicated servers, as well. “At some point we will use a combo of cloud and dedicated,” says Robbins. “And Rackspace would be the first we look at. It makes sense for the company I’m getting hosting from to have hosting as their primary business.”

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