Enabling Modern Cloud Hosting & Infrastructure

Customer Solution Case Study

Case Study : Consultation and deployment of custom private cloud environment to meet privacy requirements and high availability

Customer: Vote Compass
Website: www.votecompass.com
Employee Size: 12
Country or Region: Canada
Industry: Electori Literacy Application to educate consumers on policy platforms of political parties

Customer Profile: Vote Compass is a non-profit initiative operated by an independent, non-partisan network of academics. It is motivated by the premise that an informed and engaged electorate is crucial to a robust democracy.

Services: Dedicated Hosting, Private Cloud, Managed Security, geographic load balancing, managed support

"We chose AURO because no one else can deliver a complete solution. We saved time, money and hassles in deploying a ready made solution to meet both our privacy requirements and need for high throughput during the Canadian national election. "

Cliff van der Linden, Executive Director, Vote Compass

Vote Compass is an online electoral literacy application. Its aim is to encourage engagement with and stimulate discussion around the policy platforms of political parties. Vote Compass is designed to offer perspective on where the parties fall in the Canadian political landscape. In partnership with CBC and its election coverage, the application contains a rich database that allows users to the wesites to compare their opinions on a sampling of policy issues with the platforms of the political parties. The research team wades through speeches, manifestos, policy statements and interview transcripts to provide each voter with a clear and concise perspective on where the parties stand. Vote Compass is overseen by an advisory board comprised of some of Canada's leading academics in the area of electoral politics.

Use Case

Vote Compass is using AURO Enterprise Cloud (AURO) to host its own infrastructure and to host its related websites. Vote Compass is currently utilizing AURO's infrastructure and Enterprise Pro Dedicated Servers setup in a cluster for it's Web-based application including data storage and retrieval. In doing so, resources were allocated dynamically as site traffic fluctuated, and ensured that no one server can be overwhelmed as the application is spread evenly across the cluster infrastructure. Vote Compass leverage all SSD hard drives and enterprise security with HP Tipping Point Intrusion Prevention and Juniper SRX 210 firewalls.

Deployment Specs:

- Fault Tolerant Enterprise Servers
- High Availability Failover
- Hardware Load Balancing
- Hardware IPS & firewalls(s)

For More Information about other AURO Successes, please visit:
auro.io./support/casestudies

Business Challenge

The Vote Compass developers were using PHP (including modules such Memcache, Mcrypt, JSON and Apache 2, as well as several other command line tools. Working with the clustered servers, the application and database were load balanced across the entire cluster, and utilized remote backup to capture and protect the data for statistical analysis. A significant (and required) benefit was the ability to handle incoming traffic spikes and have them automatically routed to different nodes based on a current load levels.

Cliff van der Linden, Executive Director of Vote Compass, said, "when we engaged with Canadian Web Hosting, I was looking for a partner that could not only meet my requirements but look deeper into the configuration and validate a solution that would provide zero downtime and ensure we had an accessible site 24 hours a day. During the initial conversations, our developers outlined a base configuration and once reviewed AURO was able to make recommended changes to the setup that would allow for higher capacity and improved response times.

This included running load tests and to look at the available IOPs to see where the traffic bottlenecks could take place. In addition, they closely examined the benefits of going virtual and

leveraging their CDN versus dedicated hardware. The decision was made to leverage physical hardware to avoid some of the potential pitfalls of virtual servers including increased bandwidth costs. In addition, because the content is dynamic and not static, physical servers were the better option.

Successful Results

Because of their expertise, we were better able to focus on our original vision – building a site that would engage Canadians and allow better understanding of party platforms and policies. "I'm happy to report that working with AURO's help, we're fulfilling the goals we set out to fulfill." Together, Vote Compass successfully completed more than 2 million responses with zero downtime." Because of the success of this program, AURO and Vote Compass are continuing their partnership and working on version 2.0 of the Vote Compass Application.