

Cloud Case Study

The Road to Banff leads through the Cloud

The Customer

Hosted by the Canadian Digital Media Network (CDMN), Canada 3.0 is Canada's premier digital media forum where decision makers and policy shakers across Industry, Government and Academia converge to spark creativity, foster innovation and drive productivity. Almost 2,000 people attended Canada 3.0 2011 which took place May 2nd to 4th in Stratford, Ontario.



This year's event included the Road to Banff Venture Forum Pitch Off where more than 50 start-ups competed for one of three all-expense-paid trips to the Banff Venture Forum October 2011. Registrants were coached through pitch off workshops before moving on to 30-minute opportunities to put their best case forward to a panel of seasoned investors. Each participant received a videotape of their pitch and panel feedback.

The Road to Banff Pitch Off was presented by Communitech, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to helping technology companies in Waterloo Region start, grow and succeed.



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The Need

CDMN and Road to Banff Pitch Off organizers had arranged for Conestoga College's School of Media and Design to record more than 50 presentations and feedback from an equal number of judges so that each of the participants would have a permanent record of their presentation and feedback.

The challenge was how to quickly and easily deliver the large video files to the appropriate individuals after the conference had concluded. Because the presentations included confidential financial and strategic information, the process had to be as secure as possible.

There was the option of burning a DVD for each participant and mailing it out, but the process was too slow, the media unreliable – and Canada 3.0 is all about leading edge digital media technologies. There had to be a better option.

The Process

The organizers decided to leverage the unique digital community based at the Communitech Hub to find a solution. CDMN approached Canadian Cloud Computing about leveraging its Trusted Canadian Cloud™ to distribute the videos on-line.

We implemented a small, secure cloud server to host the service, provided a scalable solution to ensure their evolving storage needs were met. Bandwidth was not an issue because of the Trusted Canadian Cloud offers redundant high-speed pipes to the Internet.

Full service at Canadian Cloud Computing does not end with secure hosting services; we understood the needs CDMN had as the forum organizer and sought partners to meet that need. Canadian Cloud Computing met with other members of Communitech and fellow Communitech Hub tenants including start-ups and large companies.

Based on the client's need and our research, we determined that FileCatalyst, based in Ottawa, was the best possible solution and helped us deliver an all-Canadian solution for an all-Canadian conference.



FileCatalyst technology is a software-based solution designed to accelerate and optimize file transfers across global networks. FileCatalyst is immune to the effects that latency and packet loss have on traditional file transfer methods like FTP, HTTP or CIFS.



The Solution

In a matter of days, we went from an urgent call from the client to delivery of a highly successful solution including:

- a cloud server and storage for two months from Canadian Cloud Computing
- FileCatalyst Server software that would be deployed on the Trusted Canadian Cloud

The final solution allowed for easy uploads, fast and secure access, and satisfied conference organizers.

We deployed FileCatalyst onto a single Nimbus cloud server, which includes 1 VPU, 4 GB of RAM and 50 GB of disk storage. The cloud server and our interconnect easily supported multiple simultaneous downloads. In fact the single most important factor that limited download speeds was the user's own Internet access.

The Results

Over fifty start-ups participated in the Road to Banff Pitch-Off competition. Each one had their 10-minute pitch and 15-minute Q&A sessions recorded with a broadcast-quality digital video camera. Each was converted into a 750 MB MPEG-4 file that Communitech staff uploaded to the FileCatalyst server.

The FileCatalyst Webmail management portal allowed Communitech to generate and send each participant a customized email with a link to their file and a security PIN. Clicking on the link opened a web page where the participant could enter the PIN and download their file.

On first use, the browser loads a FileCatalyst Java applet that optimizes the download for maximum speed without requiring installation of an application. Functionality such as on-the-fly compression and MD5 checksums help to ensure not only speed but also reliability.

After download, the sender at Communitech also received email notification of the successful transmission. Finally the video files were flagged for automatic deletion six weeks after the contest and the cloud resources were released.

The Lessons Learned

First and foremost, we learned that our Trusted Canadian Cloud has the power and flexibility to quickly and easily meet unique customer demands. We were able to allocate the cloud resources and deploy an application in a very short time frame.

We also learned that The Communitech Hub provides a unique collaborative environment where start-ups, established high-tech companies, and academic institutions can work together to solve real-world problems.

"With close to 2,000 people converging for 2 ½ days at Canada 3.0, there were literally thousands of tasks to be completed to ensure success for this project, said Tony Niederer, Director, Digital Media Marketing & Communications for CDMN. "Canadian Cloud Computing took ownership of our challenge and delivered a superb solution thanks to its experience and partner-based approach within mere days of our request."

For More Information

You can find more information on the companies and organizations involved at the following web sites:

www.canada30.ca

www.cdmn.ca

www.communitech.ca

www.filecatalyst.com

www.canadiancloud.com