colt

Case Study
Becoming digital-first with a successful cloud strategy

The pandemic spurred RCS MediaGroup to boost investment in digital media. With Colt, it's found a transparent, flexible and reliable solution.

Client
RCS MediaGroup

Sector
Media

Challenges
Migrating CMS to multi-cloud, managing traffic and data growth without disruption, supporting the company's digital-first strategy

Products
Dedicated On Demand connectivity to the Google and Microsoft cloud offerings

RCS MediaGroup is a leader in media and publishing in Europe, whose prestigious publications include Corriere della Sera and La Gazzetta dello Sport newspapers in Italy, El Mundo and Marca in Spain, and other magazines, supplements and inserts. It also operates in international sporting events like Giro d'Italia, UAE Tour, Milano-Sanremo, as well as radio, TV channels, new media, a publishing house, a business school, and an advertising agency. With 3,200 employees, it provides information and content spanning politics, economy, sports, culture, fashion, and food through a mix of traditional and innovative media.

Digital-first strategy

In early 2020, when the coronavirus pandemic first hit Italy and then the rest of Europe, RCS MediaGroup faced three major challenges. The first was to provide continuous information to keep readers and subscribers informed about an unprecedented crisis. The second was to update its internal systems to allow remote work, provide access to publishing content and ensure quality of service. The third involved reimagining the entire company — from its information services to event operations — from a digital-first perspective, to give the business the flexibility to adapt to a rapidly changing environment.

For example, 2020 ended with a record 308,000 digital subscriptions to Corriere della Sera, 138,000 more than in 2019 (+81%). One of the many innovations in 2020 was the launch of the Gazzetta dello Sport and Giro d'Italia apps to follow live fixtures.

"The increasingly compelling need for a high-level, digital audience requires a flexible, resilient infrastructure with virtually limitless capacity," says Monica Venanzetti, Telco Manager at RCS MediaGroup. To achieve the flexibility needed, the group needed to migrate to the cloud and its underlying network.

On-demand value

RCS started the process of optimising its network, application management, and business and publishing systems, moving part of its IT infrastructure to Google Cloud Platform and Microsoft Azure.

This is where Colt came in, responding to RCS's demands with the best solution available. "The dedicated On Demand access service to the two cloud environments proved the best choice, giving RCS a flexible, reliable network infrastructure and dynamic multicloud usage, with clear benefits in terms of data access continuity and cost optimisation," explains Venanzetti.

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A secure, large bandwidth solution was needed for daily traffic peaks (350 GB on average including inbound and outbound traffic), to transfer high-quality content within the group and make it accessible on various channels.

With On Demand, RCS can control its own bandwidth, avoiding costly overprovisioning or technical delays associated with device upgrades. Within the span of a few minutes, RCS has the agility to configure a port, provision, and increase or decrease the band-width to support business initiatives.

The CMS is still in-house, though the goal is to transfer it to the cloud, increasing the bandwidth to provide the same level of agility.

The flexibility of Colt's service also meets RCS's needs for its Big Data project, moving around 300TB of data from on-premise services in Madrid to Google's servers in Frankfurt.

Transparency and flexibility

Thanks to Colt On Demand's dedicated cloud access services, RCS were able to smoothly transfer applications to the cloud. Colt's service gives maximum bandwidth elasticity, which can be scaled up or down in near real-time as needed. It has simplified ICT management and variations in network configurations, which the administrator can self-manage on the dedicated portal.

"When we decided to extend our 500 Mb/s connection for another three months in order to transfer data to the cloud, we were able to easily ensure the project had adequate bandwidth without any service disruption for our users," notes Venanzetti.

Colt was also able to provide cost transparency. "The price lists let us quickly determine the network costs for a specific connectivity," she explains, improving cost control and time-to-market. This was also the case for international connections.

Colt and RCS have been partners for 15 years. Venanzetti says the relationship is strong because Colt "gives us excellent reliability and cost-effectiveness. It has proven an excellent choice, in this difficult period, to have reduced connection costs to the cloud and for international connectivity, reinforcing the infrastructure and increasing technological synergies."

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