



Creating a bigger and safer cloud

PlanetHoster speeds private cloud deployments, boosts performance and enhances security with its new global data center infrastructure



Customer profile



Company	PlanetHoster
Industry	Web Hosting
Country	Canada
Website	planethoster.net

Business need

PlanetHoster needed to upgrade its data center infrastructure to increase private cloud scalability, improve performance and security, and lower energy usage and costs.

Solution

The company implemented Dell server, storage and networking technologies in its data centers in Canada and France to support more cloud clients, boost performance and speed deployment times.

Benefits

- Stops twice as many DDoS attacks as before
- Scales to support triple the volume of client data
- Speeds boot-up time by 25% to respond faster in the event of system failure
- Cuts data center energy costs by 10%
- Deploys cloud environments for clients in hours instead of days

Solutions at a glance

- [Cloud Solutions](#)
- [Data Center](#)

“We plan to triple the current amount of client data we support over the next five years, and we can support that growth with the Dell storage and server solutions we deployed.”

Mina Shenouda, COO, PlanetHoster

PlanetHoster prides itself on being on technology's cutting edge. To stay competitive, the growing Canadian provider of web hosting, domain name registration and other web solutions strives to offer state-of-the-art technologies and hosting facilities to more than 40,000 global customers.

To support its strategy, the company needed to upgrade the IT infrastructure in its two production data centers in Montreal and Paris. "We were having some challenges with our previous technology provider," says Mina Shenouda, COO of PlanetHoster. Specifically, the existing PlanetHoster storage infrastructure was difficult to scale. "We have more than 500 terabytes of client data, and we were expecting to at least double that, so we needed more scalable storage," Shenouda says.

PlanetHoster also sought to enhance security by streamlining management and adding anti-distributed denial of service (DDoS) attack capabilities, and it wanted to decrease operational costs. "We needed a platform that would enable very fast security management tasks, such as upgrades and patches, as well as added anti-DDoS protection," says Shenouda. "We also wanted to reduce our energy usage to avoid overheating our hardware and lower our cooling costs."

Upgrading its infrastructure was especially critical because the company's private cloud was growing fast. Its cloud is powered by the Red Hat® OpenStack® platform, which supports more than 100,000 websites in North America and Europe. With Dell and Red Hat, PlanetHoster gets state-of-the-art technologies capable of massive scalability to meet the company's dynamic business demands. "Our private cloud is one of our fastest growth areas, and we needed the right technology behind it," says Shenouda.

Upgrading Montreal and Paris data centers with Dell server and storage solutions

PlanetHoster evaluated data center solutions from three technology providers, including Dell. The company ultimately chose Dell because it fit the requirements perfectly. "The cost/performance/reliability combination is key to us as we offer our clients best-of-breed solutions, with no compromise on security and at a good price," says Shenouda. "Of all the vendors we approached, Dell clearly stood out in its ability to offer this combination. Dell is also fully compatible with OpenStack, which is not the case with competitors.

"We can more easily prioritize our storage with the Dell Storage SC9000 solution, because the data we use daily is automatically stored in Tier 1, while other data is allocated to Tier 2 and 3."

*Mina Shenouda, COO,
PlanetHoster*

Products & Services

Services

Dell Configuration Services

Dell Financial Services

Dell ProSupport

Hardware

Dell Networking S4810 switches

Dell PowerEdge R630 rack servers with Intel® Xeon® processor E5 family

Dell Storage SC8000 and SC9000 storage area networks

Software

Red Hat® OpenStack® platform

This eases in-house development for the PlanetHoster team.”

PlanetHoster began its IT infrastructure upgrade by implementing 100 Dell PowerEdge R630 rack servers with Intel® Xeon® processor E5 family in its Montreal data center, where the organization’s OpenStack cloud platform is hosted. “We chose the PowerEdge R630s for their reliability and ease of updating,” Shenouda says. The company also deployed a Dell Storage SC8000 hybrid solid state disk (SSD) and spinning disk array in the data center. “We liked the performance and management software of the Dell Storage SC8000,” says Shenouda. PlanetHoster also deployed Dell Networking S4810 switches to connect the servers in its data center.

The company upgraded its Paris data center by deploying 200 Dell PowerEdge R630 rack servers and a Dell Storage SC9000 hybrid flash array. Both the Dell Storage SC8000 and SC9000 solutions provide automatic data tiering, with the most-used data accessed at the top tier on SSDs and data not being accessed moved to a lower tier of spinning disk. With this capability, PlanetHoster can continuously optimize its storage performance. The solution also helps PlanetHoster meet its clients’ high availability needs. “High availability is a main concern for us,” Shenouda says. “Our customer SLA is 99.99 percent, and we are able to meet that with Dell Storage SC Series arrays.”

During the upgrades at both data centers, PlanetHoster was assisted by Dell Configuration Services, which provided technical support and helped PlanetHoster configure its new private cloud infrastructure in just a few days. The full solution was installed in several weeks. “We benefited from the knowledge transfer and support we received from Dell Services,” says Shenouda. PlanetHoster took advantage of Dell Financial Services to help finance its new infrastructure, and it uses Dell ProSupport on all its new Dell hardware.

Scaling to support triple the amount of data

With its new IT infrastructure, PlanetHoster has the storage capacity to scale to meet significant client data growth. “We plan to triple the current amount of client data we support over the next five years, and we can support that growth with the Dell storage and server solutions we deployed,” says Shenouda.

The company also has more flexibility and reliability for its Red Hat OpenStack private cloud. “We saw excellent performance levels from the Dell Storage SC9000 during testing, which will help ensure high reliability for our private cloud platform,” says Shenouda. Also, the storage solution’s architecture makes it easy for PlanetHoster to manage its storage resources. “We can more easily prioritize our storage with the Dell Storage SC9000 solution, because the data we use daily is automatically stored in Tier 1, while other data is allocated to Tier 2 and 3. That means our most-used resources are easily available, but at a controlled cost compared with a competitive SSD solution,” says Shenouda.

Preventing twice as many DDoS attacks

PlanetHoster has also enhanced the security of its private cloud by installing Dell server and storage technologies. “Our data protection has increased with the Dell solutions, and we have stopped twice as many DDoS attacks as before,” says Shenouda. “Recently, we had an internal hacking contest, and it was confirmed that the Dell solutions are very secure. Also, security management is faster and better, which makes upgrades and patches easier to deploy.”

Speeding boot-up time by 25% and responding faster to clients

The organization is benefiting from the reliability of its Dell servers to improve system boot-up times for the private cloud. “Our boot-up time is 25 percent faster than with our previous

“Our data protection has increased with the Dell solutions, and we have stopped twice as many DDoS attacks as before.”

*Mina Shenouda, COO,
PlanetHoster*

infrastructure, because the Dell PowerEdge servers are powerful and perform well, and the Dell Networking switches provide the low latency we need," says Shenouda.

PlanetHoster is also able to respond faster to clients looking to move to the company's private cloud, because of assistance from Dell Financial Services and Dell ProSupport. "We are able to deploy new clients very quickly by relying on the Dell Financial Services model," says Shenouda. "Working with Dell Financial Services, we know we can get very reliable solutions on demand, and we can deploy a virtualized infrastructure in just a few days. This is important, because we need to be highly responsive to our clients' demands. Also, Dell ProSupport gives us more mobility. For example, when we configured our Dell Storage SC9000 array in Montreal and shipped it to France, we received very responsive and efficient support from Dell to make everything go smoothly."

Cutting energy usage and costs by 10%

"We have reduced energy costs by 10 percent, because Dell PowerEdge servers include strong components, are very reliable and can be used at 80 percent constantly with no risk of failure or overheating," says Shenouda. "This is in line with our environmental policy, which seeks to lower energy use and costs, particularly those associated with cooling."

Staying on the cutting edge of technology

PlanetHoster is continuing to support its corporate strategy of technology innovation. "We are staying at the forefront of new technologies and accelerating the growth of our business by partnering with Dell and Red Hat for our OpenStack-powered private cloud," says Shenouda. "We see Dell as a reliable long-term technology partner, able to keep up with our own research and development efforts and propose new technologies. Dell helps us answer a key business need: replacing infrastructure components quickly, with reliable and cutting-edge technologies and no compromise on security. Dell helps us stay a leader in providing best-of-breed solutions to our clients."

"We have reduced energy costs by 10 percent, because Dell PowerEdge servers include strong components, are very reliable and can be used at 80 percent constantly with no risk of failure or overheating."

*Mina Shenouda, COO,
PlanetHoster*

Intel Inside®. Powerful Data Center Outside.

View all Dell case studies at Dell.com/CustomerStories

