



Zen and Prezzybox - Moving the Store to the Cloud

About Prezzybox

Prezzybox is a family-run business, launched in 2001. Today it's a leading website for the online gifts market and an award winning retailer.

Project Overview

Business Requirement

- Scalable infrastructure
- Security
- Flexibility

Solutions

- AWS cloud based solution
- Fully-managed, hosted cloud environment
- Stable, resilient, scalable and responsive platform

Business Value

- Scalability and flexibility
- On-demand solution creates cost savings
- Improved performance and productivity
- Robust

For this fast-growing online retailer, aging servers couldn't keep up with demand. Zen helped it migrate to a more flexible, reliable cloud platform.

Prezzybox is an award winning retailer that has grown rapidly to become a leader in the online gifts market, offering customers a choice of thousands of unique and exciting gifts, along with features that make it easier to buy the perfect present.

The Challenge

The website was running on five-year-old servers which, while upgraded with faster processors and additional RAM, were running at the limit of their capabilities. Continual success and rapid growth were fuelling the business, yet the technical team were concerned that the site was only months away from becoming too big for its physical platform. There were fears of a catastrophic failure, with knock-on effects for the company's commercial stability.

The Prezzybox business model is highly cyclical, with huge peaks in demand during significant events such as Christmas, Valentine's Day or Mother's Day. Typically in the run up to Christmas, daily unique visitors to the Prezzybox site grows from approximately 15,000 to well over 100,000. The usual 200 daily transactions also rise each day to almost 3,000, meaning any physical infrastructure must be designed to cope with the sharp rises.

Such seasonal demand means that any physical infrastructure designed to cope with these needs will be under-utilised for the remainder of the year. A flexible cloud-based solution seemed the smart way forward, but the teams at Zen and Prezzybox knew the migration had to be handled with care.



The Solution

Zen proposed moving its servers and associated back-end infrastructure to a fully-managed hosted cloud environment based on Amazon Web Services (AWS) which offers a complete set of infrastructure and application services to provide a stable, resilient and responsive platform. Resources can be allocated on-demand, and even automatically in direct response to shifts in utilisation. It also runs on a pay-as-you-use business model, making it more cost-effective than a fixed cloud-based solution with a set monthly fee.

The whole solution is designed, implemented and managed by Zen's own Managed Services teams, enabling Prezzybox to focus its resources on improving the core business and boosting its presence on the web instead of worrying about the servers.

Zen worked with Prezzybox to plan the migration, meticulously planning every stage with a member of the team working in-house as the platform went live. Throughout the process, the Managed Services team responded to feedback and kept Prezzybox's in-house team informed. "Zen worked very hard in identifying problems and laying out a robust architecture to stage everything on" says Prezzybox's Craig Lager. "They were also excellent in dealing with unforeseen problems, identifying and implementing potential improvements to our configurations, and answering any questions that we have."

The Benefits

The key benefits of the new solution are scalability and flexibility. The AWS cloud scales automatically, on-demand as traffic levels grow and transactions mount up, giving Prezzybox the resources it needs during the pre- and post-Christmas periods. Prezzybox only has to pay for the resources it uses, lowering operating costs, and being driven directly by customer demand.

What's more, if Prezzybox needs to change configurations or add more servers, AWS makes doing so easy, using customisable templates designed by the Zen Managed Services team.

The AWS solution is inherently more reliable, highly redundant, has a geographically diverse configuration and responds rapidly to any loss of service.

“The great thing about working with Zen is that they worked extremely closely with our Technical Development team and were on hand 24/7 to ensure the migration went as smoothly as possible. This was hugely reassuring in what was a tense time. Obviously there were teething problems, but they were dealt with quickly, efficiently and with an urgency that we found comforting and one which ultimately gave us the desired results.”

Zak Edwards, Managing Director, Prezzybox

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Zen Internet

Product Portfolio

Our portfolio provides organisations with the ability to communicate, operate and transact with confidence. We provide the application delivery infrastructure required to compete in today's highly connected world with a range of service options that scale for micro businesses through to enterprise and multi-site operations. In addition to Business Broadband, Fibre Optic Broadband, Business Talk, IP VPN, Leased Lines and Ethernet, our portfolio also includes:

- Managed Firewalls
- Domain Names
- Web Hosting
- Dedicated Servers
- Colocation
- Data Backup
- Managed Cloud Hosting
- Voice