Innovate UK   aws

Databarracks' case study

INNOVATE UK SELECT DATABARRACKS TO KICK-OFF LONG TERM AWS STRATEGY

About Innovate UK

Innovate UK is the trading name for the government's Technology Strategy Board, an 'innovation agency', that works with people, companies and partner organisations to find, fund and drive science and technology innovations across a number of different fields.

The agency employs over 300 staff from its head office in Swindon, and estimates it has committed over £1.8bn to innovation projects across 7,600 organisations since 2007, creating 55,000 new jobs and adding more than £11.5bn to the UK economy in the process.

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Databarracks

The Challenge

Innovate UK's Catapult Programme seeks to turn commercial ideas into a reality by bringing together the best of the UK's businesses, scientists and engineers in a series of world-leading research and innovation centres.

To date, there are 11 centres, spanning different areas of focus and research, such as Cell and Gene Therapy, Precision Medicine, Future Cities, Offshore Renewable Energy and more, each with a corresponding web presence.

Maurizio Fantato is Senior Project Manager for all things digital at Innovate UK. After experiencing a combination of issues with their legacy hosting solution, Maurizio decided to explore public cloud hosting options, based on the "Cloud First" policy recommendations made by the Government Digital Service.

"Initially, we were hosting 6 of the sites on individual instances with a single point of failure. We were experiencing frequent outages and using a unique CMS that we knew was going to be difficult to migrate to a new platform.

We needed a more stable and resilient way to host the Catapult sites without increasing the management complexity and with 24/7 support. With the right partner, public cloud services represented a good alternative."

"Databarracks helped us redesign and optimise the way we deliver the Catapult sites for the AWS platform, and everything has been transparent, reliable and secure so far."

The Solution

Maurizio started exploring different public cloud service providers on the government's G-Cloud Digital Marketplace, eventually settling on Databarracks.

"We had fairly basic needs from our previous hosting supplier, but this was our first public cloud project, so we were in uncharted territory. Choosing a provider that would guide us through the process, and act more as a partner than just a technology supplier, was crucial. The Catapult programme is a cornerstone of Innovate UK, and as such it was a great candidate to demonstrate our intentions to make cloud a priority going forwards. Of course, that also meant success was critical."

In 2016, Databarracks consolidated Innovate UK's hosting environment and migrated 6 of their Catapult sites to AWS.

"Straight away, Databarracks suggested some areas for improvement in our previous hosting architecture. They helped us redesign and optimise the way we deliver the Catapult sites for the AWS platform, and everything has been transparent, reliable and secure so far. We've consolidated from 6 sites across 6 instances down to just 2 boxes, replicated across each other so there's no single point of failure, as well as considerable cost savings."

The Benefits

"We were moving from a hosting solution with a pretty locked down CMS to something more open source that gave us a greater degree of functionality, but also, being open source, exposed us to more risks. We needed a partner with the migration experience to help us transition smoothly, but also with a deep heritage in security to help us understand and mitigate against new risks.

"In the early part of the migration we actually saw some suspicious access requests on the environment that resembled a DDoS attack. Whilst the issue was resolved without incident, it confirmed our need for a provider able to deliver robust, round the clock technical support.

"This was our first AWS project and it's been very helpful to have such a consistently supportive partner. The success of this early project has given us a blueprint for future projects we have in development. We're mandated to increase our use of public cloud services like AWS, and Databarracks have helped us achieve that."

About Databarracks

Databarracks is the UK's specialist business continuity and IT disaster recovery provider.

In 2003, we launched one of the world's first true managed backup services to bring indestructible resilience to mission critical data.

Today, we deliver award winning data and continuity services from some of the most secure data centres in the world, 30 metres below ground in ex-military nuclear bunkers, supported 24/7/365 by our team of handpicked experts.

We make enterprise-class continuity, security and resilience accessible for organisations of all sizes.

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