Zendesk's Cloud-Based Customer Service Platform Lives in RagingWire's Mission Critical Data Centers
ABSTRACT

Zendesk, Inc. is a cloud-based customer service platform with offices in eleven countries and headquarters in San Francisco, California. The company brings organizations and their customers closer together through its customer support, self-service, and proactive engagement applications. Zendesk’s platform helps organizations build relationships with customers by making it easier for businesses to engage and form better relationships with their customers.

In 2011, Zendesk established an innovative IT pod in RagingWire’s Sacramento data center. Over the following two years, Zendesk was impressed with RagingWire’s customer-focused services. RagingWire provides on-site “Remote Hands and Eyes” services to help Zendesk keep its servers operational, and security services to keep Zendesk’s IT pods safe from intruders. RagingWire’s 2N+2® redundant power and cooling architecture helps to ensure that Zendesk’s cloud servers are always up and running. Also, RagingWire’s facilities offer abundant space, and RagingWire’s account team works with Zendesk to scale their data center footprint as their business grows. In 2013, Zendesk decided to implement an additional pod at RagingWire’s Ashburn, Virginia data center.

THE COMPANY

Zendesk, Inc. is a cloud-based customer service platform for companies who wish to do their own customer support, using their own customer service agents. Headquartered in San Francisco, Zendesk provides a full suite of Software as a Service (SaaS) customer service software tools built around three pillars:

- **Customer Support:** To provide the best customer support, Zendesk brings all of your conversations into one place – email, social, phone, chat or web – providing customer service on every channel. Agents can log customer issues as “tickets,” and collaborate with other agents and technicians at their company to resolve those issues. Zendesk streamlines support operations with time-saving tools like ticket views, triggers, and automations.

- **Self-service:** To make it easy for customers to find and discover information, Zendesk has extensive self-service functionality to create an online destination where customers can answer their own questions. With Zendesk you can build a knowledge base, community, and branded customer portal in a matter of minutes.

- **Customer Engagement:** To create an experience that is more about the customer and less about the ticket, Zendesk provides survey tools and analytics that enable more meaningful, personal, and productive customer conversations. For example, Zendesk Benchmark measures support quality on several metrics and provides comparisons with industry benchmarks so that you can discover new strategies for raising customer satisfaction.
Complementing these web-based software tools are Zendesk Embeddables, a combination of APIs, widgets, and SDKs (software development kits) that allow developers to embed Zendesk functionality natively into any app, website, or mobile device.

“Our products might be called ‘Customer Service Software as a Service,’” explains Steve Loyd, VP of Engineering Operations at Zendesk. “Our solutions help our clients to improve their relationships with their own customers, and to establish teamwork and cooperation between agents at their company.

“We have more than 57,000 paid customer accounts on our customer service platform and live chat software in more than 150 countries and in 40 languages. Our clients include everyone from small startups to Fortune 500 companies, across a wide range of industries.”

THE CHALLENGE

“Zendesk has multiple technology pods housed in data centers throughout the U.S.,” Loyd explains. “Each pod runs a full implementation of our solutions. As a SaaS provider, we have to ensure that our cloud-based Help Center platform, voice applications, and social tools will always be up and running. Even a short IT failure would take our business offline, and disrupt our clients’ customer service efforts.

“In 2011, we were looking for a data center where we could build out a new set of IT pods. We needed a facility that offered solid systems around power, environment, and security, plus abundant space to house our servers and expand our pods as our business grew. But more importantly, we needed a data center provider with a people-focused account and professional services team, including reliable ‘Remote Hands’ services to do everyday maintenance on our servers and keep them operational.”

THE SOLUTION

In 2011, Zendesk established new IT pods in RagingWire’s Sacramento data center. Over the next two years, RagingWire provided Zendesk with outstanding customer service. Zendesk was impressed by RagingWire’s flexibility and support in helping them maintain their Sacramento infrastructure. So in 2013, Zendesk established an additional set of pods in RagingWire’s data center in Ashburn, Virginia.

“RagingWire has given us great support in sales and provisioning, and through their ‘Remote Hands and Eyes’ services and on-site security staff,” says Loyd. “We’re not experts ourselves in the implementation and maintenance of data center power and cooling systems, but we can see when a data center is set up to handle our needs in those areas. Since our own business is built around customer support, we value vendors like RagingWire who provide exceptional service with a customer focus in mind.”

BENEFITS

REDUNDANT POWER AND COOLING

“What sets RagingWire’s facilities apart from other data center providers is their 2N+2 power architecture,” explains Loyd. “When we toured the Sacramento and Ashburn facilities, we saw the critical systems they have in place – the on-site sub-station, the gas-powered generators, the Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) rooms. We also saw their redundant cooling setup, and the environmental controls they have.”
“Thanks to the design and performance of RagingWire’s power architecture, we’ve never had an issue with server availability. And there’s never been a power or cooling event in either data center that impacted us.”

**DISASTER RECOVERY**

“Since RagingWire has designed their power and cooling systems with multiple redundancy levels, we have more confidence in the overall resiliency of their facilities,” says Loyd. “It greatly reduces the risk that one of our pods (at a RagingWire data center) might go down, and we would need to do disaster recovery at another facility (outside RagingWire).

“Also, RagingWire manages their supply of space, power, and cooling ahead of customer demand. So if we ever lost one of our other pods (at a facility outside RagingWire), we’d be able to implement a recovery effort at one of RagingWire’s data centers.”

**AVAILABILITY OF SPACE**

“With nearly 1,000,000 square feet of data center space and 80 megawatts of power, RagingWire has the largest data center in the state of California and a significant presence in Ashburn, Virginia. Plus they are growing in both locations and planning to open new data centers in other top U.S. markets,” Loyd explains. “Zendesk continues to stay with RagingWire (instead of searching for other vendors), because we know they will have space and power available for us to grow our IT pods as our business grows.

“RagingWire periodically works with us to assess how much of our contracted space is actually occupied in their data centers. They help us to understand our growth patterns, and coordinate with us when we need to reserve additional server space ahead of time.”

**SECURITY**

At Zendesk, we take our security obligations seriously and require our data center providers to do the same,” says Loyd. “RagingWire has exceptional physical security in its facilities which complements our own defense-in-depth security architecture. Each facility has locked and secured entry area, where you have to check in, present a government ID to the security staff, and pass through a mantrap. Some parts of the facility require two-factor access, so you need an access card and a PIN code to enter those places. Also, Zendesk requires SSAE 16 SOC 2 certification, for which RagingWire provides us with certification reports.

“RagingWire directly employs their own security personnel in their facilities. This makes a real difference, because these security people have a sense of ownership and accountability. They want RagingWire to be successful, so they provide better service to customers. We’ve had experiences at other data centers where security is outsourced to a third-party contractor, and it usually isn’t a good customer service experience.”

**OUTSTANDING CUSTOMER SERVICE**

“RagingWire’s operations are extremely effective,” says Loyd. “They notify us about any changes to the data center environment, even if it’s something as simple as re-painting the walls. They also notify us if they need to enter our cage space. Since we can’t be at the data center all the time, this transparency is of great value to us.”
RagingWire operations are effective and transparent. Infrastructure Services Delivery technicians provide expert fit-up. Dedicated project managers are a single point of contact.

“We make use of RagingWire’s ‘Remote Hands and Eyes’ services if we need someone to go into our cage and reboot a server or swap out a failed disk drive. Their infrastructure services delivery team has provided us with supplementary construction in seismic bracing, and in provisioning of electrical circuits and additional cooling. They’ve been quick to deliver on our requests, and we’ve never had an issue in schedule or capacity.

“If we need additional space or power, RagingWire works with us to spec out, agree on, and deliver what we need. It’s just good business for them to provide that to us, quickly and effectively, without arguing over contract terms. To me that’s not flexibility – that’s giving us exceptional, customer-focused service.”

RagingWire Data Centers designs, builds, and operates mission critical data centers that deliver 100% availability and high-density power. The company currently has over 80MW of critical IT load spread across nearly one million square feet of data center infrastructure in Northern California and Ashburn, Virginia, with significant growth plans in both locations, Texas, and other top North American data center markets. As an NTT Communications group company, RagingWire is one of the most financially strong companies in the data center industry and is part of the global network of 140 data centers operated by NTT Communications as part of the Nexcenter™ brand.

With customizable colocation environments and flexible designs for wholesale and retail buyers, a carrier neutral philosophy, extensive compliance, and the highest customer loyalty in the industry as measured by the Net Promoter Score®, RagingWire meets the needs of top internet, enterprise, and government organizations. The company’s patented power delivery systems and EPA ENERGY STAR rated facilities position RagingWire as an industry leader in reliability and efficiency. More information is available at www.ragingwire.com.

TAKE THE NEXT STEP.

To learn more about RagingWire data center solutions, contact us.

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