

Advanced Data Exchange (ADX)

Advanced Data Exchange Seeks Uptime Reliability for New Applications

Since 1992, Advanced Data Exchange (ADX) has been offering outsourced electronic data interchange (EDI) services helping large and small companies connect to each other to exchange business documents. Located in Fremont, Calif., ADX is a privately-held company that has thousands of customers across hundreds of trading communities in dozens of industries.



Situation

ADX sports a broad client base, comprised mostly of mid-tier suppliers for large buying organizations within three main markets. Its industrial customers include companies in manufacturing, distribution and construction; its retail customers include department stores, hardware stores, grocers and restaurant suppliers; and its Life Science customers include companies that manufacture and distribute medical, scientific and laboratory supplies.

ADX uses EDI and other technologies to improve the commerce processes between trading partners (i.e. buyers and sellers). The goal of ADX is to help its customers achieve better business results. When using ADX services, sellers improve customer satisfaction and buyers are assured that their suppliers perform to preferred supplier standards.

For years, ADX served these markets with legacy outsourced EDI services. These services were offered through a network-centric architecture, but for the past couple of years, ADX has been in development of a next generation architecture that will add value to their services by improving overall commerce process execution between trading relationships.

With the creation of their new architecture, ADX will continue offering its high-end outsourced EDI services and expand into broader Business Integration and Commerce Management Services.

"We can now provide a far more valuable service to our customers by helping them improve the business relationships between their customers and suppliers," says Carl Lehmann, vice president of solution strategy, ADX. "As specialists in EDI, Business Integration and Commerce Management we help our customers improve the quality, reliability and timeliness of the data associated with buying and selling goods and services."

This means that when ADX helps companies improve the quality of the information exchanged between them; they are also helping improve customer satisfaction and supplier performance. Improved data quality, and timelines of delivery, coupled with the ability to track the exchange of information among members of a trading community will enable that trading community to become more efficient and competitive.

To support its new services, ADX sought a technology partner that offered best practice IT discipline, highly reliable technology, superior security, and sound business processes. They looked at a variety of partners to help with the infrastructure and support and decided on Rackspace® because of unheralded support, security and infrastructure.

Solution

Two years ago, ADX approached Rackspace to help create and host their new infrastructure. ADX required that Rackspace work with Oracle Consulting Services and DCC Software to determine the best hardware and software components required to support their new architecture.

"Rackspace was crucial in helping us understand the specific hardware support required of our software applications and business demands," says Alice Raia, senior director of technical services, ADX. "Rackspace ultimately procured all the equipment and quickly got it up and running in their data center so our software partner, DCC, could begin with installation."

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Rackspace essentially built three environments; production, staging and development, all on Linux platforms, which support ADX's new web-based, software-as-a-service solution.

"We view software-as-a-service as a flexible business model for our customers," says Lehmann. "Our solution services are subscription-based and by hosting at Rackspace we are assured that our customers have uninterrupted access to run their businesses reliably."

But it doesn't end there. ADX plans to move their entire back-end infrastructure as well as their website to Rackspace.

Raia explained that ADX did not want to own the equipment. They needed someone else to deal with the operating system and equipment so they could focus primarily on their customers, solutions and services. She went on to say that the ADX management team felt confident in Rackspace abilities in reliability, continuity and security control.

Benefits

Both Lehmann and Raia describe their experiences so far with Rackspace as outstanding and very beneficial.

"One of the things I found amazing was Rackspace monitoring offerings go above and beyond any hosting standard," exclaims Raia. "We have standard NimBUS monitoring running, but Rackspace built in additional monitoring applications, based on our specific needs, for a very reasonable price."

ADX also enjoys taking advantage of Rackspace readily available Database Administrator (DBA) team. They rely on Rackspace for infrastructure related DBA issues, such as backup, rack install and configuration settings.

"Rackspace Fanatical Support® is proven true and not just a marketing hype," explains Raia. "They are very proactive on patching and giving us a heads up on how the software is interacting with the hardware. The services and support we get are well above and beyond that of any other hosting provider. Not only do they have the expertise but the willingness to help chip in and figure out what's going on and offering suggestions."

Raia offered an example of a problem where their Rackspace DBA team devised a unique solution to certain time-out and performance problems. Citing that, to her, such "beyond the call of duty" solutions represent outstanding customer service.

"This is the type of support and service ADX needs to continue to succeed," says Lehmann. "I like the way Rackspace does business. They understand what it takes to implement IT best practices. I believe this will help us not only with basic IT management, security, and disaster recovery but with business continuity as well."

All this results in ADX relying on Rackspace to guarantee their servers are up and running 24x7x365. Raia explains that ADX makes money through transaction flow and volume. When a transaction hits their network and it runs through the application, it has to work. If ADX experiences downtime, transactions could be canceled, they lose money and customers would go elsewhere.

ADX currently has a bank of Dell PowerEdge 2850 servers running Red Hat Enterprise Linux as well as several other devices including managed backup, storage, a load balancer and a firewall.

"We were very pleased with the service we were receiving from our previous hosting provider," says Lehmann. "But with the new services we wanted to offer, our needs changed. It required us to create a more sophisticated system that needs a higher degree of reliability. Rackspace meets and exceeds this need. Overall, I'm impressed with Rackspace's Fanatical Support model, its services and products, and general expertise. I look forward to continued, mutual success."

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