

Save the Children

working more effectively

thanks to the Cloud



Save the Children is one of Australia's largest aid and development agencies dedicated to helping children. It supports children in 125 countries around the world and has offices in 31 countries, including Australia.

Save the Children touches the lives of millions of children each year through its projects addressing health, education and humanitarian responses in the Asia-Pacific region.

Like any aid agency, it's important for Save the Children to use its funding carefully and economically and that critical dollars from donors, supporters and partners are spent directly on projects reaching those in need. Part of this efficiency includes its internal processes.

It's vital that Save the Children uses its budget deliberately and streamlines its processes to ensure as much money as possible it spent reaching the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children. When it comes to saving or improving the life of a child or responding to crises quickly, every dollar counts.

This case study examines how Save the Children has reinvented its IT processes to be more efficient, agile and cost-effective. Running Microsoft

Azure, it has moved from hosted datacentres to an entirely cloud-based solution. This change has improved the everyday lives of Save the Children staff and, more importantly, the lives of the children they serve.

Background

Save the Children was using a range of disparate business IT systems, including communications, service desk, payroll and CRM. These systems were maintained at a physical datacentre located near its head office in Melbourne.

Save the Children's internal ITC department consists of 11 full-time staff in its head office. The team's core strengths are in servicing the organisation's specific needs, such as infrastructure and service desk applications.

The Problem

Limited scalability and flexibility

Save the Children was confronted with several business challenges due to its existing IT infrastructure.

This included:

- Inefficiency due to disparate systems not working harmoniously.
- Limitations of agility and inability to rapidly deploy infrastructure to meet changing business requirements.
- Reducing cost while delivering key projects for the business.
- Allowing the organisation to deploy and test applications rapidly – and cost-effectively – before scaling them across the entire system.

The Solution

Move from physical datacentres to Azure

Save the Children realised there were problems with its existing operations.

It approached Microsoft for help in managing its various IT systems, with the possibility of moving to the cloud. CNI (now Thomas Duryea Logicalis), a Microsoft Gold Partner, invited Save the Children to attend an Azure Fast Start session in Melbourne. CNI's Cloud Team was able to provide some recommendations and clarity around the challenges Save the Children was experiencing.

CNI's Cloud Team prescribed a three-step program to solving Save the Children's current datacentre headaches:

- Establish an Azure presence and rapidly migrate all virtual machines from the existing datacentre.
- Optimise the various services and the way they work together.
- Provide continuous improvement and opportunities for scalability to accommodate both current and future needs of Save the Children.

Challenges

There were several challenges associated with a shift of this nature:

- CNI worked closely with Save the Children's existing providers to migrate and update their systems – a process that could, at times, be unpredictable and frustrating due to the inherent nature of moving away from incumbent providers.
- CNI used their experience working with legacy applications to migrate out-of-date software to Azure without requiring lengthy upgrade projects.
- Due to the speed of the rollout, Save the Children's in-house IT department needed to adapt quickly and lean heavily on CNI's experience in this area.

CNI's process for implementing Azure enabled them to deal with challenges as they arose, thereby avoiding them adversely influencing the success of the project.

The result so far

Through the implementation of Azure, Save the Children is now able to spend less of its budget on IT infrastructure – money that can be used to directly reach children in crisis and need.

- ✓ On track to realise projected **savings of 49%** on data centre and infrastructure costs.
- ✓ IT team is now able to **focus on its core strengths** – such as help desk and CRM, and enhancing the organisation's use of these tools rather than trying to manage systems that do not serve a productive purpose.
- ✓ **License consolidation** and the removal of a legacy third-party back-up solution to utilise built-in Azure capabilities.
- ✓ Moving to newer, compatible apps for **improved business efficiencies**.
- ✓ A **single identity** for staff to access multiple applications – such as Dropbox, Salesforce, and around 3000 other cloud-based apps.
- ✓ Achieve the status of **Microsoft Managed Account**. This means they have a dedicated Microsoft account manager to provide further support where needed.

Despite the initial challenges, Save the Children has moved full-steam ahead to embrace the cloud, and is now seeing the benefits in the field.

The road ahead

Save the Children continues to see improvements as this program progresses. The vision of all employees accessing the necessary data from any device, anywhere, any time is on track to become a reality. It is anticipated that, by the end of April 2017, all Save the Children's systems will be cloud-based.

Most importantly, these efficiencies and the associated savings can be used to directly reach children, helping Save the Children to deliver on its mission and to increase its positive impact for marginalised and disadvantaged kids.

“CNI's Public Cloud Division, previously known as CNI, has been extremely proactive and has stepped-up to the plate on multiple occasions. They've been getting on with it, working with our partners and Microsoft to overcome hurdles and roadblocks, as well as working well with our team.”

Adrian Staff, CIO
Save the Children

