rackspace HOSTING

IRONMAN®

THE COMPANY

The World Triathlon Corporation is both the owner and organizer of Ironman-branded events and products. This small governing body oversees more than 80 world-championship-qualifying events worldwide. As the number one user-based sports brand in the world, they have built key partnerships with Ford Motor Company, PowerBar, and Timex and have been featured in a range of media outlets including NBC, CNN, Sports Illustrated, and The New York Times.

THE SOLUTION

WTC faces a unique challenge due to the nature of its product. The company's sites attract moderate traffic during the non-race season, averaging around 1.5 million visits per month; but, during events, traffic spikes are intense and unpredictable. In addition to the incoming traffic from visitors, there is a need to upload massive amounts of real-time race data coming from multiple layers of GPS and timekeeping technology as well as spotters' reports and multimedia assets.

Ironman's participation in the Cloud Servers with managed service level pilot was driven by a need for cost-effective scalability with solid 24/7 support.

"We started testing the Cloud last year. Our traffic isn't always predictable," said Travis Sitzlar, Ironman's Chief Technologist. "It's largely centered around events, and especially around the World

Championships, where it scales extremely high. In a 48-hour window, we'll pretty much do the same amount of traffic that we do the rest of the year combined. So historically, on dedicated platforms, we would start trying in August to guess what our traffic was going to be in October, and start putting in boxes to try to give us that capacity."

"I had external systems set up just to watch those systems, and then when something did go wrong, I was the one who had to go in and fix it," said Sitzlar. "Back in 2000 or 2001, I was the only tech person that we had. So for a long time I was on call 24/7/365: I had the monitoring systems automatically pinging me anytime something went wrong, and if I didn't know how to fix it, then we were in trouble, because we didn't really have anybody else to go to. Fanatical Support, to me, means that I get to sleep at night."

THE SUCCESS

Since moving to Cloud Servers with a managed service level, Sitzlar gets to sleep at night, without having to worry about patching or errors. And during October's Ford Ironman World Championship, Ironman's network of sites worked smoothly, effortlessly scaling to handle the waves of incoming statistical data, as well as big spikes in traffic. Despite setting new records in simultaneous webcast viewers, peak traffic, and total uniques, the Cloud-based systems all operated flawlessly,

enabling the onsite staff to concentrate solely on the event, and not the infrastructure. Several other partners and vendors who had gone with other, more traditional, hosting solutions and who were either linked from Ironman's websites or mentioned during the webcast, were not quite as prepared and, after suffering crushing loads and traffic, have now approached Ironman wanting to learn more about how they use the Cloud.

"I love that you're combining the managed service level that I've had on the Dedicated side for all these years with the Cloud systems that allow us to scale and adapt rapidly. To me, that's the greatest solution."

Travis Sitzlar, Chief Technologist – IRONMAN®