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Scholastic Gains Visibility and Control Over its Multi-Cloud Environment

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—ADAM JAPHET
Head of Technology Services
Architecture & Design, Scholastic

SCHOLASTIC IS THE WORLD'S LARGEST PUBLISHER AND DISTRIBUTOR OF CHILDREN'S books, with $1.6 billion in annual revenue. Adam Japhet is the Head of Technology Services Architecture & Design at Scholastic. With his 17 years at the company, he's had a front-row seat as the publishing, education and media leader expanded its global reach and began its move to the cloud.

The Challenge

In 2012, as digital readers grew in popularity thanks to the increased availability of tablets and the ubiquity of mobile devices, the leadership team at Scholastic a cknowledged the business benefits they'd gain by adopting cloud computing, and made plans for an organization-wide rollout. "We began with an IaaS model, relying on AWS," says Adam. "The goal was for nearly all technology functions to rely on the cloud, so our target was to become 95% cloud based in 5 years."

The shift to cloud computing could not detract from Scholastic's primary business goals. "We enlisted companies to do the heavy lifting on our behalf," Adam recalls. "Our environment is heterogeneous – we started as an AWS shop, but since then have adopted additional cloud platforms to support our applications. Today, we continue to work with AWS, as well as Google Cloud Platform, Oracle, WorkDay, ServiceNow, SalesForce and many others. The result is that we are able to leverage the capabilities of many different vendors – but it also means that we must keep up with their ongoing transformations. That requires a tremendous amount of integration, different levels of thinking, and roles that perform several functions simultaneously. At the same time, while ensuring we can scale and support everything as required, we needed to maintain our focus on the company's purpose: providing value-added products and services."

With infrastructure spanning multiple clouds, the challenge Scholastic faced was visibility. "We needed an approach that would help us identify how well we were managing workloads, how well we were managing our infrastructure. We had other tools in place, but nothing that would let us see the alignment between utility and efficiency. Our on-prem footprint was dwindling and our IaaS footprint was rapidly growing – we had to act."

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The Solution

As their IaaS footprint continued to grow, the Scholastic team started to search for a solution that would provide a consolidated view of the company's infrastructure. "We couldn't see our deployment at scale, across all of our accounts," said Adam. After surveying various cloud service management solutions, they selected CloudHealth. "There were some decent products out there, but we felt that CloudHealth had better engineering, and we believed in [CTO and Founder] Joe Kinsella's vision of what a cloud management service should look like and would ultimately become."

By offering a consolidated view into disparate data sets, CloudHealth gave Scholastic much needed transparency and, by extension, better control over its cloud platform utilization.

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The Results

Visibility improved almost immediately. Scholastic now manages their multi-cloud environment with a holistic view into cost, configuration, performance, utility and security.

The policy and automation capabilities within the CloudHealth platform have also been a boon: "We've implemented policies around tagging so that we can better organize resources for cost allocation and reporting. We've learned that you can easily save 30% off the bat just by using CloudHealth to analyze your recommended investment in AWS Reserved Instances."

Although Scholastic had other cloud management tools in place, CloudHealth was able to provide what the company needed to properly size their infrastructure. "We want to make sure we're running as efficiently as possible," says Adam. "CloudHealth has saved us countless man hours and significant costs."

Offering advice to his industry peers in similar situations, Adam shares the following: "As you increasingly rely on the cloud, make sure you have people with the right skillset and dedication to the task at hand. Start small and get some early successes under your belt. Consider security, account access, network connectivity, service identification and usage policies, etc. You need to have the right scaffolding in place if you're going to effectively grow on your foundational work."