

GoCompare quickly moves to the cloud to increase performance and set up future growth

Rackspace migrated GoCompare's technology platform to the cloud to help the FinTech leader manage demand and scale for the future as it expands and transforms its offering.

Our customer

GoCo Group is a FinTech business that allows consumers to identify the best financial deals. GoCompare founded in 2006 as the UK's first price comparison website to focus on product features as well as price, it now has multiple brands, more than five million website visits a month and more than 300 commercial partners.

The obstacles they faced

To keep ahead of the competition and continue offering customers a great way to save time and money, GoCompare has been developing new services which require a solid infrastructure foundation. At the same time, it needed to be able to manage unexpected spikes in traffic without impacting the user experience.

How we helped

Working with Rackspace Technology Professional Services and Microsoft Azure experts, GoCompare has begun migrating its infrastructure to Microsoft Azure in a phased approach. This allows the business to trial different workloads in the Azure environment without clashing with other internal initiatives.

What we achieved together

Following the first phase of the migration, the site's sustainability, response times and availability have improved. In only six months, GoCompare has laid the groundwork to support ambitious future plans to broaden the GoCompare offering faster than they expected.

“To grow, we need to continue to stand out from the crowd. That means delivering an exceptional service at speed, but also introducing new services that really do save our customers time and money.”

Kieron Nolan
Group Director of
Technology, GoCo Group



Rackspace Technology helps GoCompare stand out in a crowded marketplace and move forward

GoCompare is one of the UK's leading FinTech businesses, with more than five million website visits a month and more than 300 commercial partners across several brands under the GoCo Group umbrella. Founded in 2006 as the UK's first comparison website to focus on product features as well as price, GoCompare is now listed on the London Stock Exchange. The GoCo Group is evolving

its AutoSave proposition with weflip and Look After My Bills, offering customers auto-switching — finding the best energy deals and automatically moving consumers onto them. GoCo Group's historical success and future plans are all driven by technology.

Technology has always been at the heart of GoCompare, but as it looks to grow in a competitive market, it needed its infrastructure to support ambitious plans. As part of that, it had to deliver a consistent user experience, particularly when managing spikes in traffic.

Working with Rackspace Technology, GoCompare began a staged migration to

Microsoft Azure as it provided a scalable, future-proofed foundation for growth.

“Technology is the biggest function within the business, with over 110 employees. That's not by accident,” said Kieron Nolan, group director of technology for GoCo Group.

“For the first decade or so of our existence, our focus has been on providing customers with comparison services in a quick, seamless manner. You can't do that unless you invest in both the front and back end.”

Thanks to increased competition in the comparison market, GoCompare is continually developing new services. “To grow, we need to continue to stand out from the crowd.

That means delivering an exceptional service at speed, but also introducing new services that really do save our customers time and money.”

One of those innovations is auto-switching — identifying the best deals and then automatically switching customers to the right ones for them. GoCo Group introduced weflip, an energy-focused switching service, back in October 2018. To do this, having a future-proof infrastructure is vital.

It also needs to be scalable. “We aren't a seasonal business like in retail, so we don't tend to have spikes related to specific times of the year,” explained Nolan. “What we do have, which is harder to plan for, is

unexpected peaks in traffic that can be related to media topics, whether it's a TV advertising campaign or an investigation into how much consumers are paying for a variety of services. When that happens, we see a spike in traffic and if the site struggles to perform, we lose a major revenue opportunity."

GoCompare has a long relationship with Rackspace Technology, dating back 12 years, and it was the obvious choice when it came to migrate to a new infrastructure. The Professional Services-led migration was managed by the Rackspace Technology Professional Services team, supporting GoCompare from consulting around cloud architecture through to delivery. "We wanted a partner who knew our business, had done these sorts of projects before, and was on the same page with our mission and ambitions. Rackspace Technology gave us all of that and more."

A platform for today and tomorrow

GoCompare decided to choose Azure over other cloud options due to the business' longstanding use of Microsoft products and services. "We have an exceptional uptime record," said Nolan. "But that means there is a concern over anything that might trigger any downtime, even for such an important migration. It was critical we minimised risk and by choosing Azure, where we already knew Microsoft met our requirements, made sense. We went with a partner we trust and were able to avoid a complete platform re-write."

To ensure all GoCompare's requirements were met, Rackspace Technology held workshops to compare cloud architectures and define the right solution for GoCompare and its future plans. This exploratory phase started

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almost a year before the migration and ensured all key stakeholders were on board.

“We’ve had complete support from our C-level executives in the migration. They understand why we needed to do this migration and how it will enable our future plans. The only thing we needed to be mindful of is the concern around any sort of downtime, which is why picking the right partner and platform is critical. Having Rackspace Technology in the room with us has helped answer those fears and plan ahead.”

The first phase involved moving disaster recovery systems onto Azure, with the next step to open the platform up to its customer traffic. This phased approach means the migration would not clash with other internal initiatives and allows each workload to be tested and trialed separately before all IT operations are moved over.

“We trust Rackspace Technology to guide us through the challenges ahead, be transparent and work with us to come up with solutions. We also get the team’s insights from other projects they’ve worked on, as well as current and upcoming IT trends that might affect us. It’s a true partnership in every sense of the term.”

Kieron Nolan, Group Director of Technology, GoCo Group

Adopting a phased approach also allows the Rackspace Technology and GoCompare teams to run quarterly review and planning sessions, going back over objectives and planning the next steps. “We know that there has never been a perfect technology project,” said Nolan. “We trust Rackspace Technology to guide us through the challenges ahead, be transparent and work with us to come up with solutions. We also get the team’s insights from other projects they’ve worked on, as well as current and upcoming IT trends that might affect us. It’s a true partnership in every sense of the term.”

A successful first step

The disaster recovery workload migration to Microsoft Azure completed and with zero data loss — this is in comparison to losing up to 10 minutes of data historically.

GoCompare has already seen an improvement in the site’s sustainability and availability, with response times also up. These early results are helping lay the groundwork for both the continued migration and longer-term plans.

“Our mission is to save people time and money and ultimately, make their lives so much easier,” Nolan said. “Moving to Azure and using its cloud services, allows us to do both, with a more resilient, scalable site.”

An automated future

GoCo Group’s AutoSave offering may be the future, but even at the backend its investment in the infrastructure is expected to pay significant dividends. The ability to automatically scale as needed is expected to allow the platform to manage ten times its normal load.

For Nolan, it’s not just about being able to do the basics well, however. GoCompare is already tapping into Azure’s wider capabilities, with auto-switching empowered by the cloud’s big data analytics, Azure Databricks. Indeed, weflip is being powered solely by Azure and Azure Databricks. “Choosing Azure was not just about being able to meet our current requirements but also to unlock new abilities. Having that footprint in place means we can tap into services such as data science, analytics and predictive modelling as we need them.”

About Rackspace Technology

Rackspace Technology is the multicloud solutions expert. We combine our expertise with the world’s leading technologies — across applications, data and security — to deliver end-to-end solutions. We have a proven record of advising customers based on their business challenges, designing solutions that scale, building and managing those solutions, and optimizing returns into the future.

As a global, multicloud technology services pioneer, we deliver innovative capabilities of the cloud to help customers build new revenue streams, increase efficiency and create incredible experiences. Named a best place to work, year after year according to Fortune, Forbes, and Glassdoor, we attract and develop world-class talent to deliver the best expertise to our customers. Everything we do is wrapped in our obsession with our customers’ success — our Fanatical Experience™ — so they can work faster, smarter and stay ahead of what’s next.

Learn more at www.rackspace.com or call **1-800-961-2888**.

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