Our customer

BMJ is a global medical and science publisher of 60 specialist medical and science journals. BMJ shares cutting-edge research across China.

What we achieved together

After moving to a fully auto-optimized architecture, BMJ has a more agile development process with everything it needs to deliver a truly global service.

How we helped

Most critical healthcare challenges organizations and clinicians today face is a need to offer cloud-based services in China. BMJ needed optimized multi-cloud and hybrid cloud environments to support continuous integration and automation along with the ability to offer cloud-based services in China.

The obstacles they faced

BMJ needed a global medical and science platform with a digital platform that helps publishers solve critical healthcare challenges in a new, complex market.

Customer Case Study – Healthcare

The Publisher

Research across China

Shares cutting-edge

British Medical Journal

Customer Case Study – Healthcare
BMJ

Formerly known as The British Medical Journal, BMJ is one of the world’s oldest general medical journals, with a history that goes back over 170 years. Over that time, BMJ expanded to encompass 60 specialist medical and allied science journals with millions of readers worldwide.

Now a global brand with a worldwide audience, BMJ helps medical organizations and clinicians tackle today’s most critical healthcare challenges. They do this through their digital platform, publishing cutting-edge academic research, providing professional development solutions and creating clinical decision support tools.

Needing the right infrastructure

BMJ’s infrastructure grew organically as new sites, applications and features were commissioned— and it became apparent that the infrastructure supporting the application release process was no longer fit for purpose. So BMJ made a conscious decision early on to set the foundations for real change.

BMJ had become a 24x7 organization in recent years. Their products had become international in profile, so their tolerance for downtime — scheduled or otherwise — was diminishing. BMJ needed a new approach. In a way, we were victims of our own success,” explained Alex Hooper, Head of Operations, BMJ. “The technology department’s focus was on getting the cool new stuff to market and there was little time to go back and revise the architecture and as newstuff to market and there was little time to go back and revise the architecture and as

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Finding a new partner

The RFP for a new supplier was BMJ's signal, both internally and externally, that they wanted to initiate radical change. When they started looking for a new managed service provider, BMJ drew up a list of 15 vendors, which was then narrowed to a shortlist of three. These managed service providers were asked to complete a short task to demonstrate their expertise and commitment.

"We wanted someone with the whole package, someone we felt we could work in partnership with. Rackspace had managed AWS, they did hybrid clouds, they could help us expand into China and they had the adaptability to work BMJ's way, and they shared our vision for the future," Hooper explained.

The goal of BMJ's operations team was to move to a fully automated, shared-nothing architecture where each product would have its own set of application and database servers and where code and files could be moved to a fully automated, shared-nothing environment. The process of moving infrastructure became the lever that could bring cultural change to the organization and cement in place a new DevOps way of working.

"We went from an old way of developing systems to an agile environment," said Hooper. "Some of the problems we had were with automation, but we knew that to truly solve our problems — as well as support our global ambitions — we needed the right infrastructure to work with us in the way we wanted to expand into China and take advantage of the cloud. We wanted to work with someone with the whole package who could demonstrate that.
Of all the potential partners BMJ spoke with, only Rackspace was able to deliver on what they promised. That drive and ability to realize the company’s vision were key components in the success of the project. By the end of the first year, BMJ had fully virtualized, with over 200 virtual machines running their applications 24x7 in a private cloud infrastructure. The biggest change, however, was in the release cycle and the efficiency improvements that came with virtualization.

“For us, it’s all about efficiency,” Hooper explained. “Previously we were lucky to do one release a month. Now we do up to three a day. In the past, you could tell in the office when a release was going on — people were on tenterhooks waiting for something to break. Now a new release is uneventful and commonplace. We don’t want fireworks when we implement new releases. We want a seamless process.”

Automation was a key deliverable. In the process of automating, the interdependencies were managed or removed and the processes were understood, which freed up time to move more new products and solutions. For instance, BMJ moved from delivering content to third parties via weekly batch transfer jobs to creating an API to allow the content to be pulled and services to then be built around the infrastructure.

However, the successful private cloud solution was only the first step in setting BMJ up for even greater improvements in the future. After their success with the private cloud, BMJ moved workloads into the public cloud, with much of their front-end infrastructure running AWS and utilizing Amazon services such as RDS for their database services and EC2 for compute. This gave BMJ additional flexibility and scalability for maximum agility. They could turn off services, such as their development environment, when they weren’t in use.

Another benefit of using Rackspace’s services was their on-the-ground support in China, a growing market for BMJ, which opened their first local office in Beijing in 2015.

“We see the People’s Republic of China as a key part of our growing international network,” Cooper said. “Therefore, we needed the technical expertise to be able to expand our services into China, and a partner to help us navigate the complex frameworks required to build services there. Rackspace, with their on-the-ground support in China and knowledge of the market, has delivered local public-cloud infrastructure utilizing Alibaba Cloud.”

Previously, we could only offer stand-alone software products in China, which were delivered on physical media and required quarterly updates to be installed by hand. With Rackspace’s help, we now have the ability to offer our cloud-based services to Chinese businesses. This has made possible the delivery of applications, software and solutions for businesses that require cloud services to integrate with other cloud-based services. The additional flexibility and scalability that comes from utilizing cloud services is key to our success with Rackspace and their ability to deliver the infrastructure we need to maintain our global service. The Rackspace team worked closely with us and offered guidance and assistance in the deployment of our cloud services.

A successful journey with Rackspace delivered on their promise to deliver the infrastructure and support we needed to maintain a truly global service. We are delighted that they have been able to deliver on the promises they made to us. We are now able to offer our cloud-based services to Chinese businesses, and we are able to offer our cloud-based services to businesses in other countries as well. We have been able to offer our cloud-based services to businesses in other countries as well. We have been able to offer our cloud-based services to businesses in other countries as well. We have been able to offer our cloud-based services to businesses in other countries as well.
BMJ has the infrastructure and culture in place to cement their position as a premier digital publisher and educator.

Results and benefits:

• BMJ has the infrastructure and culture in place to grow their business worldwide.

• BMJ has a multi-cloud environment, utilizing Rackspace’s private cloud for core infrastructure, AWS for front-end workloads and Alibaba Cloud for Chinese services.

• With their technology, they have the infrastructure they need to cement their position as a premier digital publisher and educator.

• BMJ can offer new cloud-based services in China.

About Rackspace

Rackspace is modernizing IT in today’s multi-cloud world. By delivering IT-as-a-service that transforms the way enterprises think about and consume traditional and cloud computing models, Rackspace provides unbiased expertise and proven multi-cloud solutions that simplify IT complexity and reduce costs.

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

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