packet | One Signal

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2015
YEAR FOUNDED

NY & CA
LOCATION

2017
SERIES A FUNDING

Just a few years ago, OneSignal CEO George Deglin and COO Long Vo were building mobile games that attracted lots of new players, but struggled to bring them back.

"When we looked at what larger mobile app developers were doing, it was clear that they had invested a lot of time into notifications," says Deglin. "And as a small business, that was a challenge for us. We had the technical burden of sending notifications as well as simply understanding what was going to work well for bringing people back."

With 100,000 live apps served, 1.2 billion daily notifications sent, and over 250,000 developers registered, OneSignal is now the most widely used product in the space, according to Siftery. As its customer base boomed—the company experienced 10x growth in 2016—the team worked on improving its push delivery backend, including writing an internal service called OnePush. At launch, the system observed sustained deliveries up to 125,000/second and spikes up to 175,000/second.

With those performance demands, OneSignal needed to make sure its infrastructure could keep up. When the company was just starting out, "we had limited capital, so we took advantage of some free credits we had with some hosting providers, and those were helpful for us to save money at that point," says Deglin. "But we knew that as we scaled, infrastructure costs could become a pretty big cost center if we weren't careful. We began to look at which providers would both be really reliable as well as be able to provide us with powerful hardware at an affordable price."

Earlier this year, OneSignal experienced some service issues with another hosting provider, so the team began looking for an alternative. Packet's offerings seemed like a good fit. "One of the main reasons was that Packet offers PCIe SSDs at an affordable price," says Deglin. "Our infrastructure is designed in such a way that we leverage really fast storage in order to scale up vertically as much as possible. We find that scaling vertically helps both keep our costs down, helps keep our infrastructure simpler, and is also really favorable to the way our product works."

Kevin Weatherman, VP of of Business Development, points to other factors too: "Not only did Packet have great support, have a really strong technical team, and have better pricing than we were seeing out there, but it seemed to be really focused on the partnership long-term."

The migration to Packet took place in June, and resulted in just two minutes of downtime. At the time, the company was storing about 10 or 15 terabytes across several servers at its old hosting provider's data center, so there were some challenges. "We needed to make sure that all of our data was synchronized between our old data center and our Packet data center at the time of the switchover," says Deglin. "We went through a few weeks of just setting everything up with Packet, setting up a replication of the data, did a lot of testing, and then when it came time to do the switch it was quick. The process involved us initially sending a little bit of traffic to Packet, and then making sure everything was working smoothly, and then finally making the entire switch over. It went completely without a hitch."

The benefit to OneSignal was immediate: infrastructure costs were reduced by 25%, storage costs went down by 50%, and capacity has been expanded greatly.

"The main thing is that we moved to more powerful hardware," says Deglin. "Packet has faster default hardware available, but we also worked with Packet's team to do custom hardware configurations for our database servers. We went from needing to imminently add database servers on our old provider, to having a lot of excess capacity at Packet. We also found that the performance was higher with these servers. So everything that our clients were doing worked a little bit faster, which is great."

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