Case Study

Diller Scofidio + Renfro (DS+R)

Panzura Global Cloud Solution Replaces Multiple Point Solutions for DS+R, Enables Rapid Data Recovery, Business Continuity after Hurricane Sandy

Hurricane Sandy, the most destructive and deadliest hurricane of 2012, made landfall on Oct. 29, leaving New York City, the state, and much of the eastern seaboard powerless and inundated with water. Overall, the storm's devastation was felt in 24 states, inflicting more than $65 billion in damages. Aside from the chaos inflicted on New York City's infrastructure, the power outages and flooding took their toll on scores of companies and the electrical systems that powered mission-critical computers. Petabytes of data were at risk, putting the future of hundreds of companies in jeopardy.

One company feeling this strain was Diller Scofidio + Renfro (DS+R). Based in New York City, DS+R is an international, interdisciplinary design studio with a staff of 100 architects, artists, and administrators that integrate architecture, the visual arts, and the performing arts. As with many firms in the architecture, engineering, and construction (AEC) space, DS+R relied heavily on its various architectural, engineering, and design documents for business success.

With Panzura, DS+R saw immediate results:

- Implemented data protection and disaster recovery strategy
- Executed flawlessly with proven business continuity results
- Enabled unlimited storage access to public cloud
- Consolidated multiple technologies into Panzura's singular storage solution

Customer Challenges: Nature and Technology

The company's building was severely damaged from the storm. It lost all power, had no working heat or cooling systems, and had limited access as the subways and streets became flooded. With the building immersed in more than four feet of standing water, employees could not get up to 17th and 18th floors, where DS+R offices were located, nor could they access the company's server room. But an earlier upgrade of its backup and recovery systems prevented the company from incurring a death-like blow from data loss.

Upgrading Systems for Data Preservation

Months before the storm hit, DS+R realized that large architectural design documents were eating up storage. Having access to this assembly of files, however, was absolutely vital. Data disaster recovery and business continuity plans were severely lacking. DS+R had employed a Dell PowerEdge R710 server as its primary file server, with a LaCie NAS system for archiving, and tape for backups. However, with minimal IT staff, and a limited budget, the company wanted to consolidate, and outsource, its ineffectual storage of files, archiving, and backup – and put it all in the cloud.

To upgrade its storage infrastructure to meet 21st century demands, DS+R implemented the Panzura Filer, along with Amazon Simple Storage Services (S3), as the basis for its cloud network attached storage (NAS). The company utilized the new storage design for a multitude of purposes, including secondary NAS, data protection, disaster recovery, and business continuity. The Panzura solution effectively replaced a conglomeration of storage solutions, including a Windows server, backup software, tape libraries, off-site physical vaulting, and limited local storage capacity.

Now, with Panzura's inherent data protection – frequent snapshots, continuous replication, and full encryption – DS+R was able to off-site data while having access to all document versions, all the time.

Systems Upgrade to Panzura Saves Data

Panzura Technical Support is geared to provide proactive and highly efficient support services, ensuring continuous operations and access to business critical data. When DS+R's data center lost power and had limited physical access because of the hurricane, Panzura enabled rapid recovery via the Amazon S3 cloud, providing emergency access to all of DS+R's data.

The response time of Panzura Technical Support, and the extremely quick time to re-establish access to critical files, exemplifies Panzura technology. Within the Panzura Distributed Cloud File System resides an automatic restore mechanism, perpetually capturing snapshot images as data is created and updated. For DS+R, this inherent data protection was a large-scale improvement over its previous system. Once business normalcy resumed, DS+R had full system access with absolutely no data loss.

DS+R currently manages 12TB of storage across 90+ users and expects that to grow to more than 20TB in the near future. Having learned valuable lessons on data recovery, and knowing the value of its design documentation, DS+R plans on archiving most of its files and models in the Amazon S3 cloud, leveraging the local cache on the Panzura Filer. This will ensure rapid local access to vital data. This also will enable DS+R to easily scale and support future documentation, or even geographical, expansion.

> *"Panzura's Distributed Cloud Storage System allowed us to create a recovery platform and access our data stored in the cloud, which kept us productive until full power and access was restored. In the future, we expect the Panzura Freedom NAS functionality to fully replace a variety of our IT systems, including backup devices and file servers, enabling a seamless path to future organizational growth."*
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> —Chris Donnell, IT Manager, DS+R.

When (non-storm) Clouds are Good

Panzura's Distributed Cloud Storage System – Filer, Freedom operating system, and Distributed Cloud File System – enabled DS+R to address a broad array of business use cases by leveraging the flexibility, efficiency, and cost benefits of the cloud.

Companies of all sizes are choosing Panzura as their path to cloud integration for storage and data maintenance needs. A single filer offers active archiving, consolidation, and centralization of files, and enables easy file sharing, data protection, and disaster recovery in public or private clouds.

DS+R is a prime example of an industry leader in its sector embracing the potential of cloud storage and employing it for a multitude of purposes, including life-saving data recovery for business continuity.

For more information, please read the Panzura White Paper: CAD Theory of Operation and Best Practices.

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