

Planet Hits Radio & midPhase Services, Inc.

SoftLayer® Customer Success Story

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Who They Are

Planet Hits Radio

Planet Hits Radio was founded in 2004 with a commitment to providing high quality Internet radio and a variety of programming options. In four years it has expanded its service from offering one radio channel to streaming multiple channels, each with a distinct musical format:

- Planet Hits Radio Just the Hits
- Planet Hits Radio Smooth Sounds
- Planet Hits Radio The Mix
- Planet Hits Radio The 70s Channel
- Planet Hits Radio The 80s Channel
- Planet Hits Radio The 90s Channel

Beyond just playing music, Planet Hits also streams hosted radio shows and special live programming. The channels can be accessed via the company's website or through third-party media players including Microsoft® Windows Media Player and Apple iTunes®. Planet Hits' variety of programming and multiple mode distribution strategy has helped the network to steadily grow listenership since its inception to now reach an average of 2,000 listeners per day.

midPhase

midPhase is a Chicago-based Web hosting and Internet services company founded in 2003. The company was acquired by Great Britain's leading Web hosting organization, UK-2 Group, Ltd. in December, 2007.

midPhase's full portfolio of products includes budget, shared, advanced, reseller, and other hosting services, as it focuses on providing:

- Advanced products built on a strong technology foundation
- Exceptional value through reasonable pricing
- Personal and responsive service and support

The company has grown faster than the industry average every month since it was founded: it now employs 75 staff members and serves more than 120,000 customers worldwide.

In March, 2008, midPhase formed a strategic partnership with SoftLayer® to offer dedicated servers, merging its strengths with SoftLayer's advanced hardware and automated server management capabilities. The relationship has allowed midPhase to expand its product line but continue focusing on customer support rather than managing a dedicated server data center of its own.

Planet Hits Radio — At A Glance

Company

Planet Hits Radio

Location

Ottawa, Canada

URL

www.planethitsradio.com

Profile

An Internet radio network delivering six channels of streaming music and live programming.

midPhase Services, Inc. — At A Glance

Company

midPhase Services, Inc.

Location

Chicago, Illinois

URL

www.midphase.com

Profile

An Internet services company providing budget, shared, advanced, and other hosting services, and a SoftLayer dedicated server reseller.

Challenge

Planet Hits Radio needed a highly reliable dedicated hosting solution with an exceptional level of bandwidth to accommodate the constant and growing demand on its streaming Internet radio channels.

Solution

Chose dedicated servers offered through a strategic partnership between midPhase and SoftLayer.

■ Challenge

The Internet radio industry is a crowded and competitive environment. The number of available networks and channels continues to grow, as do their bandwidth requirements as each network tries to increase its streams' bit rates to offer higher quality audio and attract more listeners. Networks also have an increasing need for more reliable uptime—every second of downtime sends listeners to switch to a competing channel.

As Planet Hits grew from running from one shared server to multiple dedicated servers, it tried a wide number of hosting service providers. It experienced support and performance issues ranging from exceptionally slow support responses to even once suffering a 20-hour service outage, impacting its listenership and advertising.

Planet Hits needed a hosting solution that would combine powerful dedicated server hardware with rock-solid network and data center operations and an exceptional level of support. The solution also had to provide a level of bandwidth that would accommodate the growing demand for Planet Hits' programming, allow the network to increase its channels' bit rates, and have the capacity for adding more channels in the future.

■ Solution & Results

Planet Hits chose to purchase midPhase dedicated servers offered through the midPhase and SoftLayer partnership.

Having already been a SoftLayer customer, Planet Hits was aware of the advantages of SoftLayer's Customer Portal and automated services including automated OS reload, full backend services, and remote reboot, as well as the security and efficiency of out-of-band management provided by SoftLayer's Private Network—administrators can manage servers without diverting bandwidth for listeners. Planet Hits founder Adam Guthro believed he had found a "match made in heaven" when he learned those benefits were now available with midPhase's bandwidth pooling.

Planet Hits now has access to five times its previous bandwidth. It is programming six channels of music and has increased many of its channels' bit rates from 64kbps to 128kbps as its listenership continues to grow. It is currently planning to relocate servers that it has with other hosting services—including SoftLayer—to midPhase, and extend its new bandwidth and management advantages across its entire operations.

■ About SoftLayer

Headquartered in Dallas, SoftLayer is the innovation leader in on-demand Web hosting and data center services. As the largest hosting company in the world, SoftLayer lets customers create dedicated, cloud, or seamlessly integrated computing environments, leveraging the company's world-class data center facilities in Dallas, Houston, Seattle, and Washington D.C., and network Points of Presence nationwide. SoftLayer integrates and automates all elements of its platform, empowering enterprises of any size with complete control, security, scalability, and ease-of-management via a leading Customer Portal and Open API.