



Glassbeam helps Dimension Data streamline availability of information for cloud capacity planning, monitoring and usage profiling. Dimension Data has domain expertise in networking, communications, security, data centers, end-user computing and core capabilities in consulting, integration, cloud, managed services and outsourcing. The company currently has more than 4000 clients spread across 25 global cloud data centers and is experiencing rapid growth with plans to quadruple its data center business by 2018.

Overview

Industry

- Global ICT Services and Solutions

Challenges

- Ensure adequate IT infrastructure capacity to meet client needs
- Provide greater visibility into IT infrastructure

Solution

- Plan capacity for virtual machines, storage, servers and related IT infrastructure
- Provide proactive notification based on predefined thresholds for anomalies
- Profile usage by key accounts within a time window

Impact

- Eliminate hours of manual entry of report data daily
- Provide immediate access to information through dashboards

The Challenge

Monitoring and managing the lifecycle of all of the data centers' IT components and their interconnectivity is critical to aligning the supply of data center capacity to client demands. It's up to the Infrastructure Group to ensure that data centers are running smoothly at high utilization, with all IT assets optimally deployed, and all customers supported based on their hosting needs. To do this, staff must analyze machine data generated by various storage devices, networking gear, applications, and backup solutions.

This was no easy task, however. "We had to sift through reports each day, picking out pieces of data and hand-entering them into spreadsheets from which to build graphs," says Rob Bryant, Senior Manager, Infrastructure, Cloud Solutions

Business Unit at Dimension Data. "It was a very manual process taking hours each day."

With Dimension Data's cloud business growing ever larger, the company needed to find a more efficient way to sort through potentially millions of data points daily and deliver analytical information in a clear, easy-to-use format.

The Solution

"To support accelerated growth, Dimension Data needed to partner with big data analytics experts who could help analyze log data to manage and optimize our multiple global data center operations. The partnership with Glassbeam helps us successfully manage this growth."

Robert Bryant, Senior Manager, Infrastructure, Cloud Solutions Business Unit

It didn't take long for Dimension Data to find the answer. "To support accelerated growth, Dimension Data needed to partner with big data analytics experts who could help analyze log data to manage and optimize our multiple global data center operations. The partnership with Glassbeam helps us successfully manage this growth," says Bryant.

Glassbeam's advanced machine data analytics converts complex formats of multi-structured data from storage devices, networking equipment applications and backup solutions to profile capacity utilization across customers. It also detects and proactively notifies staff of anomalies by setting rules on specific thresholds, rate of change in CPU utilization, etc. Leveraging its powerful Semiotic Parsing Language (SPL), Glassbeam's platform can quickly extract operational information from disparate platforms and applications to provide insights to monitor and manage IT infrastructure assets in a single or multiple data centers.

The output of the Glassbeam application deployed at Dimension Data generates three dashboards: Capacity Analysis, Customer Index and the Daily Status Report. Capacity Analysis tracks current usage of the IT assets (network, storage, servers) and predicts when a particular data center or customer will run out of capacity in the future.

Glassbeam allows much deeper analytics through the ability to drill down from data center to customer or cluster level for finding that "needle in the haystack." It also allows account managers to view account status in real time and identify upsell and cross sell opportunities for incremental revenue.

The Customer Index dashboard helps classify customers by usage, capacity, geographical regions, etc. This information is instrumental in identifying top customers in different categories to devise effective marketing campaigns, support priorities, future infrastructure planning, and staffing decisions. Finally, the Daily Status Report provides reports on issues or capacity trends, helping Dimension Data move to proactive support from reactive support.

In addition to the Infrastructure Group, the Glassbeam dashboards are also utilized by the customer and project teams who are in charge of reporting what customers are using. It helps them plan ahead from a budgeting and/or IT governance perspective – e.g., all geographical regions are on the same version of the hardware firmware levels.

Management too has become a Glassbeam user, enabling them to view information on a particular client or, at a high level, estimate sales totals.

The Impact

"Before Glassbeam we were spending four to six hours a day inputting data." "Glassbeam is able to present granular data from multiple sources in one looking glass that has different lenses."

Robert Bryant, Senior Manager, Infrastructure at Dimension Data

The biggest benefit of deploying Glassbeam has been the elimination of manually entering log data, according to Bryant. "Before Glassbeam we were spending four to six hours a day inputting data."

Accessibility to data, both current and historic, is another benefit. "We are now maintaining over a year and a half of data and it's the ability to quickly report the data we need. Graphs of historic data should allow us to see trending lines during, for example, certain times of the year or in certain markets, enabling us to be more proactive."

Monitoring service levels of individual clients lets customer and project teams deliver a higher level of customer service.

The Glassbeam Difference

Prior to implementing Glassbeam, Dimension Data was struggling with a barrier to the information it needed to efficiently analyze and predict capacity utilization. Raw machine data had to be manually entered before it could be converted to useful information.

Glassbeam has eliminated manual data entry, streamlining the process. “Glassbeam is able to present granular data from multiple sources in one looking glass that has different lenses. You can easily peel back layers of detail like an onion to reveal more and more information without overwhelming your search criteria,” says Bryant. “Glassbeam takes a ton of data and presents it in a simple, easy-to-understand format.”

Contact us at sales@glassbeam.com

Glassbeam, Inc.

5201 Great America Parkway, Suite 360 • Santa Clara, CA 95054

Phone: 408-740-4600 • www.glassbeam.com

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