

CloudShare Gains Cloud Insight With Splunk App for VMware



Executive summary

CloudShare provides cloud-based solutions that make it easy for application professionals to work in the cloud. Users can efficiently create virtual machine environments, collaborate with others and deploy projects into production, with no background in IT required. The firm needed a way to collect and correlate critical performance and business metrics from thousands of virtual servers. Since deploying Splunk Enterprise and the Splunk App for VMware, CloudShare has seen benefits including:

- Increased customer conversion and retention rates
- Improved capacity planning based on a better understanding of usage patterns
- End-to-end visibility and correlation of business and operational data

Why Splunk

CloudShare focuses on what it calls the pre-production market, enabling its customers to use high-performance virtualized computing platforms to carry out a variety of applications, including development and testing, pre-sales demos, POCs, evaluations, technical training, hardware and software certification and channel enablement.

The company provides a variety of paid service options for more than 175,000 users worldwide, as well as hundreds of free trials daily. Until it discovered Splunk, CloudShare did not have a reliable way to collect and analyze log data from physical and virtual environments, as well as many other devices and systems.

According to CloudShare's IT manager, "We tried using several solutions to collect data across our environment and provide alerts, but all of them had limitations and none could provide the centralized view. Particularly with regard to our virtualized environment, it was very difficult and labor intensive to track down problems."

Industry

- Technology
- Online services

Splunk Use Cases

- Application delivery
- Business analytics
- IT operations
- Security

Challenges

- Collect and correlate critical performance and business metrics
- Manage large VMware environments
- Understand usage behavior and user preferences

Business Impact

- Increases customer conversion and retention rates
- Saves weeks in development time to create custom performance metrics
- Optimizes infrastructure resources using performance and usage metrics
- Reduces troubleshooting and support resolution times
- Enables forensic analysis of performance anomalies
- Delivers end-to-end visibility across the infrastructure

Data Sources

- VMware physical and virtual hosts
- Network, storage, CPU and memory
- Custom applications
- Customer usage metrics
- System logs: Linux/UNIX and Windows syslogs
- App logs: SharePoint, Oracle, MS Office

Splunk Products

- Splunk Enterprise
- Splunk App for VMware

CloudShare initially deployed Splunk Enterprise as a way to collect log data from the organization's backend systems. However, it soon became apparent that Splunk could do much more. Says the IT manager, "The Splunk platform connects all of the CloudShare units. We now collect everything in Splunk."

Delivering real value from virtual environments

Before Splunk, CloudShare had tried a variety of other tools to better understand its infrastructure, collect log information and create alerts. Splunk Enterprise and the Splunk App for VMware enabled CloudShare to leverage valuable VMware vSphere™ performance metrics as well as performance metrics and logs from every infrastructure component, including storage, networks, operating systems and their custom applications.

With the Splunk solution, CloudShare has gained enhanced visibility into every aspect of an increasingly complex operation. Says the IT manager, "The major value we get from Splunk software is in allowing us to correlate business data with performance metrics. We can now group our customers and understand which resources they are consuming. We are better able to understand and plan our capacity based on clear trends we have identified."

Enhanced customer service and increased conversion rates

Splunk software also plays a key role in customer service and support. Splunk dashboards are linked to operational data from virtual sources and help guide everyone from network operations and customer support to marketing/sales and R&D.

For example, Splunk is helping CloudShare troubleshoot customer concerns up to 70 percent faster by providing insight into current and historical system status and relationships. A production load

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IT Manager
CloudShare

status dashboard uses data collected with the Splunk App for VMware to show not only ESX and ESXi host data, but also the number of active VMware environments, RAM consumption and memory swapping or ballooning.

Additionally, by using the Splunk platform to collect statistics on every user, CloudShare is able to track and record the impact of free trial offers, template usage, the rate of conversion to paid services, country of origin and resource utilization. Says the IT manager, "Splunk helps us understand which customers are most likely to convert to a paid service, and provide this information to our sales force through a link with Salesforce.com. By following up on these qualified leads, we've helped increase our conversion rate significantly."

Looking forward

CloudShare is beginning to use Splunk software for fraud detection and security. Network device and firewall information gathered with Splunk Enterprise is used to create attack signatures to trigger automatic blocks or generate alerts to the NOC for manual investigation.

The IT manager concludes, "Without Splunk we could not really understand what our users are doing. Here at CloudShare we think of Splunk as our eyes—with it we can really understand and see into every aspect of our operations."

[Download Splunk for free](#) or get started with the [free cloud trial](#). Whether cloud, on-premises, or for large or small teams, Splunk has a deployment model that will fit your needs.



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