

Ascential Case Study

The Customer

Ascential is a global specialist information, data and insights company providing smart decision-making for the world's most ambitious businesses.

Our Relationship

transACT are a long-term partner and trusted advisor for Ascential.

Business Challenges

Ascential delivers a wide range of data-driven projects for businesses around the world, so they require rapid scaling abilities along with excellent performance and agility. The existing back-up and storage infrastructure was identified as having significant cost performance and compliance issues due to the 7-year data retention period.

Solutions

transACT implemented a back-up to AWS solution.

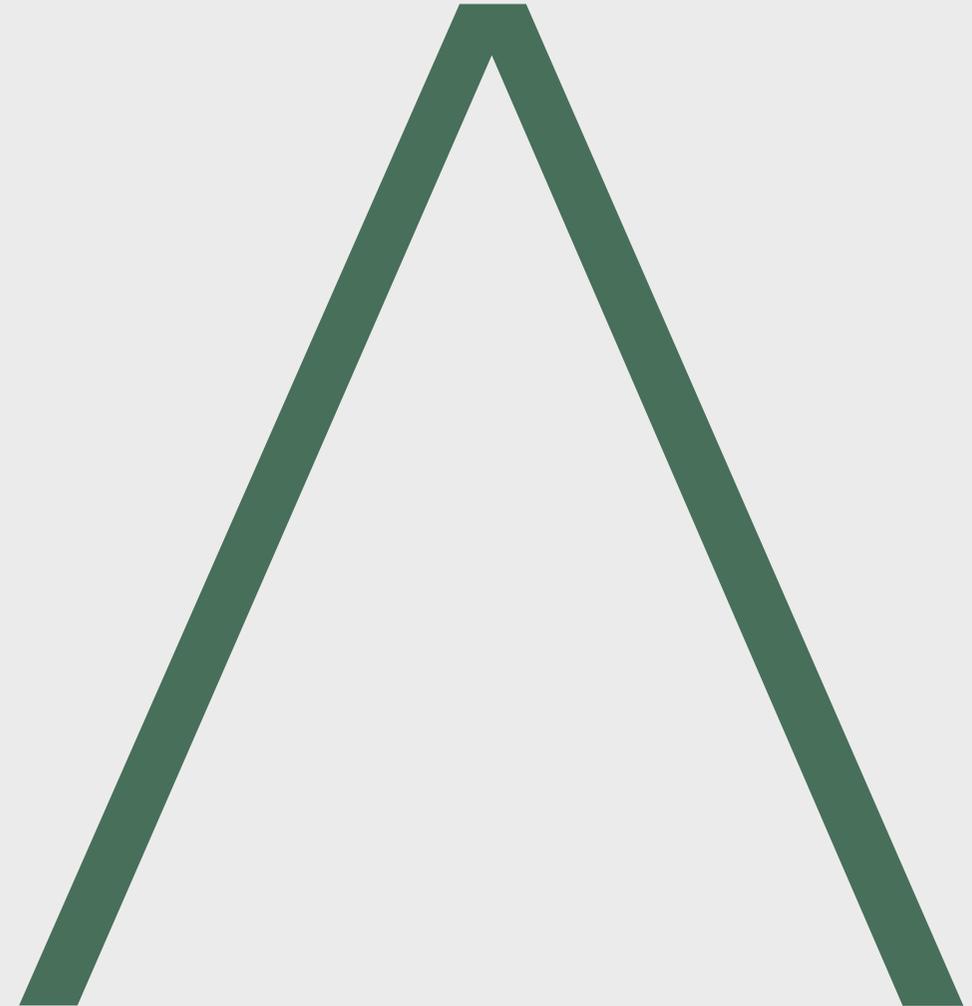
Products

AWS Direct Connect, Amazon S3, Amazon S3 Glacier AWS Storage Gateway, AWS Snowball and CommVault

Outcomes

The storage solution implemented by transACT within AWS solved both Ascential's compliance and scaling issues. As a result of the project, Ascential were able to make significant cost savings by decommissioning legacy Dell EMC on-site hardware and licensing costs, resulting in a reduction of 40%.

transACT were able to further optimise storage costs and help Ascential make additional cost savings of 18% by implementing lifecycle management and committing to a long-term storage solution. Compliance policies were adhered to by implementing global data access alongside a manageable retention period of 7 years.



transACT's implementation of an AWS storage solution allows Ascential to scale their business globally.

Ascential

Ascential is a global specialist information, data and insights company. They help their customers win in the digital economy by unlocking the information, insights, connections, data and digital tools required to understand the demands of tomorrow's consumer.

Business Challenges

Ascential's back-up and restore architecture consisted of on-premises Dell EMC environments backed by lower-end disk shelves to host business-critical applications, file and block data utilising Commvault Back-up Service.

A cloud-first strategy was implemented in 2017 with key stakeholders from Ascential and transACT delivering against objectives for all workloads based in AWS to scale across the different brands globally.

With legacy Dell EMC hardware, systems, licensing, data duplication all contributing towards escalating storage costs as well as resources and compliance needs, it was clear that there was a compelling business case for a storage solution to be implemented on the AWS platform.

Working Together

As an AWS Advanced Consulting Partner, transACT provides a range of services to help customers maximise the benefits of cloud, and in partnership with Ascential's IT Leadership Team, embarked on a project to determine performance and capacity enhancements that could be achieved with an AWS storage solution.

Both project teams worked together and identified that Ascential's legacy storage infrastructure facility had reached maximum capacity, as well as highlighting the impact of expiring support licensing costs.

Ascential would have required a substantial upfront investment if the on-premise environment were to be increased, this would have had a significant impact on their annual budgets as well as requiring investment in extra resources to handle the data sets.

transACT identified that Ascential would see immediate cost, performance and security benefits by implementing the back-up and restore storage solution in AWS in comparison to the traditional on-site solution coupled with expiring support on the hardware which could not be repurposed.

transACT utilised AWS total cost of ownership, providing comparisons for upfront costs for hardware as well as reselling hardware back to a vendor.

The proposed back-up and restore solution consisted of over 100 VM's on-site, protected by Commvault software with data deduplicated and sent to AWS S3. The solution was implemented by sending the daily, weekly and monthly back-ups over Direct Connect, for low latency network traffic.

As part of the solution, recovery points in S3 became an independent, discrete 2nd copy of the data. transACT also implemented lifecycle management to maintain steady storage costs moving forward, with Ascential utilising transACT Cloud Management Portal which provides a single pane of glass of their entire AWS estate highlighting Cost Optimisation, Security & Compliance and Inventory.

The AWS solution transACT implemented has increased the value of Ascential's data, which is now released and analysed for consumer insights and consumer trends. transACT have ensured data protection and internal compliance frameworks have been adhered to in providing a 7-year retention period. Data accessibility for compliance queries was a driver in the implementation of Ascential's cloud-first strategy, and this has also allowed additional revenue streams to be generated for Ascential by utilising their data and analysis tools within AWS.

Why Amazon Web Services

Ascential and transACT used AWS Services to create the back-up and restore solution. **Amazon S3**, and **Amazon Glacier**, were used to develop cost-efficient back-up storage in AWS cloud, while Direct Connect enabled fast and high-bandwidth network transport for back-up and restore operations.

Outcomes

Ascential now has a seamless data access solution that allows their teams around the world to experience high-performance access to data. The solution implemented by transACT has given their global brands access to data from a centralised location, which then is used for data analytics, back-ups and accessibility of legacy data without the burden of traditional data management challenges. The solution has meant significant performance and cost improvement for Ascential in areas such as capacity provisioning and capacity planning.

Storage solutions implemented by transACT within AWS have solved Ascential's compliance and scale issues. Significant cost savings were made by decommissioning legacy on-site hardware and licensing cost; delivering a 40% cost reduction overall.

Over 350TB of data was moved to AWS S3 Glacier by implementing a simple lifecycle policy, reducing storage costs by 18%.

SLA Metrics from Ascential demonstrated that six months before the AWS project, maintenance and resourcing were at

an average of 25 hours per month. This average dropped from 25 hours per month to just 1 hour per month for the three months following the project; with the decommissioning of legacy hardware servers resulting in further savings for Ascential on IT resource and overhead costs.