



## Discovery Communications Continues Global Expansion with Help from Savvis Managed Services

### Overview

Discovery Communications is the No. 1 nonfiction media company in the world. Through more than 100 global networks — including Discovery Channel, TLC, Animal Planet, Science Channel, and Planet Green — it reaches more than 1.5 billion subscribers in more than 35 languages in 175 countries. It also produces innovative consumer and educational products and offers online consumers a diversified portfolio of digital media services including HowStuffWorks.com.

### Business Opportunity

Founded in 1985, Discovery Communications (Discovery) ran a highly decentralized IT operation split among sites in the United Kingdom, Europe, and the United States during its first few years of operation. Discovery needed to build a more centralized international infrastructure that would serve multiple regions more reliably and cost-effectively and since its primary market at that time was in the United Kingdom, it made sense to locate it there. Discovery originally outsourced its U.K. infrastructure operations to Intel's hosting unit in 2001. When Savvis purchased Intel's hosting assets in 2002, Discovery decided to expand its infrastructure with Savvis, primarily for cost reasons. Discovery constantly analyzes its operations to make sure it is making the right decisions about what gets outsourced and what it can do themselves. Because outsourcing was working well, it was an easy decision to continue growing its infrastructure with Savvis.

Receiving high levels of customer service is of the utmost importance to Discovery. High-touch customer support is what Discovery has come to expect from Savvis and very close working relationships have been formed. "Savvis executives constantly touch-base with us, letting us know what the company is doing, and why. This transparency is something we have valued very highly since our relationship with Savvis began and indeed it has continued to this day," said Dale Todd, senior vice president, IT global production services for Discovery.

### Company:

Discovery Communications

### Industry:

Media

### Line of Business:

Nonfiction content

### Target Market:

Consumers

### Location:

Global

### Business Opportunity:

Build a robust and scalable infrastructure capable of supporting rapid growth of Discovery Communications' international business.

### Solution:

Savvis managed hosting and managed network services

### Summary:

Savvis delivers a complex, fully managed infrastructure for Discovery Communications to support its real-time advertising deliverables, ad sales, scheduling, and programming for all its international operations.

## Solution

Today, Savvis delivers a complex, fully managed infrastructure for Discovery to support its real-time advertising deliverables, ad sales, scheduling, and programming for all its international operations. Savvis' solution allows Discovery to take advantage of a broad portfolio of managed services. The main production system, which is hosted in one of Savvis' U.K. data centers, consists of an extensive CITRIX blade farm that is hosted on a utility computing platform. A number of complex Oracle databases run on managed dedicated servers.

Savvis also provides managed hosting in a secondary data center in Sterling, Virginia (United States), which provides disaster recovery and testing/development services using a combination of Savvis' Utility Compute platform, Savvis Symphony Dedicated (cloud compute), and dedicated managed servers (Intelligent Hosting). Savvis also manages the network that connects both data centers.

Savvis' flexible approach also allows Discovery to leverage colocation services to support its international wide-area network (WAN) that spans Discovery sites across the Asia Pacific region, Western Europe, and North and South America.

## Benefits

The Savvis infrastructure is robust, and the services provided deliver significant cost advantages. Although Discovery is very happy with the reliability and stability of the platform, it is the Savvis relationship that lies at the heart of the many benefits that have accrued from outsourcing. "The chief hallmark of an effective vendor is its ability to deal with issues when they come up – for they will invariably come up. Savvis is extraordinarily responsive and proactive, and is always there when we need them," said Todd. "Even when a performance issue is due to an application, not to the underlying infrastructure, Savvis steps up and takes on more than its fair share of responsibility. Its top priority is always to solve the problem, rather than just analyzing who is at fault." Savvis provides a leadership role in technology planning for Discovery. For example, Savvis was heavily involved in helping Discovery determine a solution for its new critical sales system in its Europe, Middle East, and Africa (EMEA) region – from planning to implementation.

Savvis' Professional Services team, in particular, has played a critical role in helping Discovery. One of the decisions that Savvis helped drive was to go to blade servers. "That decision turned out to be an excellent one for Discovery, helping us to reduce costs and gain performance efficiencies," said Todd. Blade infrastructure has also given Discovery a great deal more flexibility to scale the infrastructure in response to the needs of the applications.

## The Future

Discovery's relationship with Savvis continues to be strong. Pleased with the cost efficiencies and superb support it has received for more than eight years, Discovery recently participated in the Savvis Transformation Methodology (STM). Starting with an intensive workshop, the STM is Savvis' consultative program for helping companies transform their existing IT infrastructures from a current state to a desired future one. As an independent way for companies to objectively assess whether – and how – their infrastructure can be improved, the STM aligns IT and business goals in a way that promotes overall growth and profitability.

Savvis doesn't rest upon its laurels. "We have weekly – if not daily – conversations with Savvis, who works hard to provide us with advanced infrastructure solutions to support our changing business requirements. As new technologies become available, we discuss them as a team, plan as a team, and execute as a team. We consider Savvis a trusted provider in every sense of the word," said Todd.

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**- Dale Todd  
Sr. VP, IT Global Production Services,  
Discovery Communications**

**For more information  
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