



Innovest Systems Orchestrating Savvis Symphony Solutions to Securely Deliver Innovative Trust and Wealth Management SaaS Solutions

Overview

Innovest was founded in 2000 to provide innovative technology-driven middle- and back-office solutions to trust companies, wealth management firms, not-for-profit institutions, and other organizations that manage assets held in trust. Its Web-based systems deliver real-time information using the Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) model, replacing outdated legacy host and client-server software, and enabling clients to flexibly tailor its rich functionality to meet their specific trust management needs. Privately held Innovest currently has more than \$250 billion in assets on its platform, and processes more than 4 million client transactions a month.

Business Opportunity

Innovest had been a co-location customer of Exodus, later acquired by Cable & Wireless, since its founding in 2000. Upon Savvis' purchase of Cable and Wireless' assets in 2004, Innovest became a Savvis customer, but realized it needed more than a co-location solution to keep up with its rapid expansion. Innovest chose to implement what was then called the Savvis Utility Compute service.

"A lot of companies were offering managed hosting, but Savvis was ahead of them all with its utility compute platform, which offered us the scalability of being able to turn up a server for 30 days and bring it back down as needed," said Ray Umerley, vice president, chief security officer at Innovest. "For a shop of our size, where we were looking to grow our business very rapidly with a small staff — we had 30 people at that time — it made sense to move to something that was more of a pay-as-you go utility service."

Company:

Innovest Systems

Industry:

Financial services

Line of Business:

Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) trust and wealth management platform

Target Market:

Trust and wealth management firms

Location:

New York

Business Challenge:

Stay on the leading edge of delivering innovative and high-performing solutions with the highest security and at the lowest possible cost, leveraging cloud computing

Solution:

Savvis Symphony Virtual Private Data Center (VPDC) and Savvis Symphony Dedicated

Summary:

To securely keep up with massive growth while aligning costs to revenue opportunities, Innovest Systems has been utilizing Savvis cloud solutions for more than six years. Today, it is beta testing Savvis Symphony Virtual Private Data Center (VPDC) in preparation for deploying it as the platform for its industry-leading SaaS trust and wealth management solutions.

Umerley was very happy with that decision. “We were able to shrink our total footprint and cut our costs dramatically immediately upon moving to that platform,” he said. This sufficed for several years. But by fourth quarter 2007, Innovest’s customer base had grown 800 percent, and its initial deployment of six servers had grown to 27.

Umerley made the decision to move his Web and application tiers into Savvis’ Virtual Intelligent Hosting platform in early 2008, decreasing the data center’s physical footprint by 50 percent and its monthly costs by 25 percent. “It was very difficult to keep up with growth in the SaaS space with a conventional hardware footprint model, because you never know what one customer’s demands are going to be at any given time,” Umerley said. “And then you’re constantly bringing on new clients and new implementations. Some of them may use processes completely differently than other customers, which can have significant performance implications.”

At that point, Umerley said, Savvis had been “very quick” to come to market with a virtualization platform — and again, was one of the first to offer virtualization as an enterprise-class solution in a fully managed environment. This virtualized utility model eventually became known as the Savvis dedicated cloud. “So we’ve technically been in the cloud since before it was known as the cloud,” Umerley said.

Due to continued growth, Innovest Systems was soon ready to take the next step to the Savvis Symphony Virtual Private Data Center (VPDC), which began beta testing in early 2010. “One of the biggest challenges we’ve had as we’ve grown has been to provide consistent performance and accessibility for our test regions, demo environments, and the like,” Umerley said. “What we’re looking to do first with the virtual private data centers is to deploy our pre-production regions into the cloud for testing, quality assurance and business continuity, which will allow us to scale more readily, as well as do more software load balancing. We can even set up a separate virtual private data center for each different customer if we so choose.”

Solution

Savvis Symphony VPDC is an enterprise-grade infrastructure and hosting management service that provides businesses with dynamic and scalable compute capabilities, allowing them to reduce overall costs while focusing on core projects and addressing variable IT capacity needs. As a true high availability (HA) solution that accounts for every aspect of an enterprise IT infrastructure environment, from development to production, Savvis Symphony VPDC includes provisioning and maintenance for servers, network, storage, software and security.

Savvis Symphony VPDC also enables businesses to adapt to the rapidly changing economic and technological environment with speed, simplicity and efficiency while reducing the total cost of ownership. Savvis provides an HA infrastructure, managed and supported by Savvis and tuned to support mission-critical applications. As an integrated solution that is highly responsive, extremely reliable and simple to provision and maintain, Symphony VPDC enables businesses to mitigate risks of application and infrastructure failure and errors in day-to-day operations.

Benefits

Innovest now has the flexibility, scalability and control it needs to keep its IT infrastructure in sync with customer demand for its solutions. “Today, if I need more resources, I don’t even have to contact Savvis. I can go directly to my customer portal and create a data center and deploy it,” Umerley said. “I don’t have to talk to sales, I don’t need to talk to an engineer. Right now, via the SavvisStation portal, I can actually go in and provision storage, I can provision virtual machines, all without having to deal with any Savvis personnel.”

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Whereas in the past it could take up to 90 days to provision physical servers and build out the operating systems, Umerley can now deploy new systems in under an hour. “Then we can turn it off and make it go away, and we don’t have to pay any more,” he said. “This ability to expand and shrink as needed contributes directly to our bottom line.”

Through SavvisStation, Umerley can also run full reports on all the resources that his servers are currently using — everything from process utilization, to memory utilization, even database usage statistics.

And Quality of Service (QoS) has been superb, Umerley said. “In the six years now that we’ve been with Savvis, I can count on one hand the number of times that I’ve actually had an incident that was directly related to Savvis,” he said. “And that’s well beyond our SLAs.”

Then there’s the stellar nature of customer service and support. “I have access to extraordinarily competent support that has provided superb service over the years,” Umerley said. “We have a dedicated incident team, we have a dedicated request team, there are defined escalation paths, and I have access to all this via SavvisStation. I can view the ticket as it’s being worked, and add my own notes to that ticket. Savvis support has always been topnotch, like an extension of my own internal staff.”

And Savvis has often gone beyond the call of duty to ensure Innovest doesn’t suffer downtime. Umerley recalls one time his servers were restarting randomly, and neither his staff nor Savvis could trace it back to anything in the Savvis environment. The culprit turned out to be a third-party utility — but Savvis didn’t rest until the problem had been thoroughly diagnosed and a fix found.

“We wouldn’t be where we are today without a provider like that,” Umerley said.

Umerley acknowledged there is a lot of concern about security in the cloud, but said he isn’t worried given how the Savvis Symphony products have been designed.

“I can have Web, app and database tiers segregated,” he said. “I can have a DMZ, exactly like I currently have in my traditional infrastructure. I know the physical perimeters and the server and Web app firewalls. It’s exactly what I’m using in my dedicated private cloud. In fact, there are a lot of security features that I wouldn’t be able to provide myself without a significant amount of cost, not to mention a significant amount of training.” For example, Umerley uses Savvis’ vulnerability scanning service every month, helping him satisfy his audit requirements as well as network intrusion detection/prevention systems and URL monitoring.

“At the end of the day, the biggest thing you have to worry about is where your data is going to be. That’s a concern for a lot of cloud customers,” Umerley admitted. “And a lot of other cloud vendors put your data wherever they have space — they could be splitting your data up amongst multiple data centers, so it’s really hard to tell where it is, who has access to it, or even whether it is crossing international lines. With Savvis, you know exactly where your data is. Savvis is completely transparent.”

The robustness of Savvis security has actually helped Umerley convince potential customers that their data would be safe on the Innovest platform.

“During our sales cycle, our salesmen will lead the charge as far as our accounting platform’s features and functions, but when it comes down to the technical aspects of our solutions, the CIO and I frequently get pulled into discussions,” Umerley said. “And the main thing that I’ll end up talking about is the Savvis cloud infrastructure, security and support.”

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This goes double for compliance concerns. “We can go to a prospect, and sit across the table from their auditors and compliance personnel and tout what Savvis does for us,” Umerley said. “When they hear that we’re supported by a world-class organization such as Savvis, it decreases their overall concerns and overcomes a significant obstacle for us as a Software as a Service provider.”

The Future

Once Savvis’ enterprise cloud model, Savvis Symphony VPDC, is deployed, Innovest will be looking to use it for business continuity and disaster recovery. Umerley is excited about having the capability of building a full data center on the fly from anywhere.

“I could be in Florida creating a virtual private data center for customers in California because the data center in New York is offline,” he said. “That’s a luxury I don’t have right now with a fixed hot site. We have a lot of big plans for this down the road.”

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**For more information
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