



Ziff Davis Manages Subsidiaries and Improves Visibility and Governance

Industry

Publishing

Headquarters location

New York, New York

Employees

1,000–5,000

VMware footprint

CloudHealth®

Key features

RI management
Customized cost reporting
Automation capabilities
Tag enforcement

Cloud

AWS

Key benefits

- Identifies and deletes unused EBS volumes, saving around \$400 a month
- Leverages consolidated cost reports to track monthly budgets, pinpoint anomalies, and drive team accountability
- Improves resource hygiene with the ability to identify untagged or mis-tagged assets

Media giant Ziff Davis is world famous for distributing premium content related to technology, gaming, entertainment and men's lifestyle. Spanning 112 countries and reaching tens of millions of individuals around the globe, some of their best known digital properties include PCMag, AskMen and IGN.

The challenge

Part of Ziff Davis' evolution involves acquiring other media companies, many of which are hosted on Amazon Web Services (AWS). Over time, this made AWS management extremely complex. "Managing the cloud environments across all our subsidiaries and lines of business simply with the AWS Management Console was not sustainable," said Charmaine Honeycutt, senior director of operations for Ziff Davis. "Over time, the sprawl grew out of control. We needed a product that would give us a centralized view of all that activity."

The solution

Acting as a single pane of glass, CloudHealth equips Ziff Davis with the visibility and insight they need to effectively manage their cloud infrastructure through policy setting and governance. "We have weekly alerts set up for things like detached EBS volumes and disassociated elastic IP addresses, which previously were not tracked at all," says Honeycutt.

"We've set up automated workflows to delete unused EBS volumes. That alone saves us around \$400 a month. We had no way of doing that previously."

Charmaine Honeycutt, Senior Director of Operations, Ziff Davis



The results

At Ziff Davis, Reserved Instance (RI) management has changed drastically since bringing CloudHealth on board. “Previously, we did manual analysis on more than 200 RIs. I’d dedicate at least one day per week to the process,” said Honeycutt.

Additional benefits of the platform include the following:

- The Cost History Report shows consolidated costs across the entire infrastructure and lines of business. “We use it to drive accountability—tracking monthly progress and also pinpointing anomalies,” said Honeycutt.
- Automation of operational tasks better optimizes their environment. “We’ve set up automated workflows to delete unused EBS volumes. That alone saves us around \$400 a month. We had no way of doing that previously, and no way to track elastic IPs, either,” said Honeycutt.

- A rightsizing analysis for Amazon Elastic Compute Cloud (EC2) and Amazon Elastic Block Store (EBS) alerts them if instances have less than 5 percent utilization, so they can investigate terminating them. Honeycutt estimates they find at least one zombie per month.
- Integrations with AWS CloudTrail, New Relic, and Datadog “[give] us extra performance metrics for a more well-rounded view, and [offer] additional insight that isn’t available without an agent,” says Scott Nesmith, director of technology at IGN.
- Business Perspectives allow for precision reporting, so different groups of key stakeholders see only the information they care about.
- With the ability to identify untagged or mis-tagged assets, Ziff Davis can be more proactive on governance.

“My favorite part of CloudHealth is the level of organization within the platform. It allows you to manage multiple accounts, which has been hugely useful for us. There are limited views, as well as holistic ones, which is key when you have as many subsidiaries as we do.”

Charmaine Honeycutt, Senior Director of Operations, Ziff Davis
