

Digital Transformation at The Henry Ford:

Trusting Hostway's Virtual Private Cloud to Power Mission-Critical Web Infrastructure



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KEVIN CUBBERLY

Director of Information Technology

As a museum dedicated to curating stories from America's rich history and legacy of innovation, The Henry Ford holds over 26 million artifacts from many different time periods. From the very bus where Rosa Parks famously took a stand against segregation to the legendary Menlo Park laboratory where Thomas Edison brought incredible innovations to light, visitors to the museum can see and experience rare artifacts associated with some of the most important events in U.S. history.

While an estimated 1.7 million people visit The Henry Ford in Dearborn, Michigan each year, an additional 3 million people visit thehenryford.org online annually. And because only five percent of the museum's extensive collection is currently on physical display, The Henry Ford is actively digitizing the rest of the artifacts, building multimedia experiences around each artifact, then making them available to a global audience through their website. Needless to say, The Henry Ford website is mission critical to its business.

When it came time to upgrade its infrastructure, The Henry Ford turned to Hostway's Virtual Private Cloud (VPC) solution – powered by Microsoft Azure, which combines the security and configurability of a dedicated server environment with the flexibility of a public cloud. **Hostway VPC provides a number of key benefits:**

- Increased redundancy and reliability compared to the previous single-server environment running on Windows 2000
- Resources and scalability to support aggressive digital transformation initiatives
- Easy management by an IT staff familiar with Microsoft applications

A SEAMLESS TRANSITION

Before working with Hostway, The Henry Ford relied on a single-server environment running on Windows 2000 that was considerably lacking when it came to redundancy, meaning any failure could result in the loss of access for thousands of online visitors. Museum staff, including Director of Information Technology Kevin Cubberly, wanted to ensure that the new platform was capable of supporting a multimedia-rich experience with maximum uptime.

“Redundancy was a huge priority for our organization,” Cubberly said. “It's a mission-critical application not only for on-site guests, but for those off-site as well.”

Hostway worked hand-in-hand with the Henry Ford and Perficient Digital, an agency brought in to handle cross-platform data integration, to create a fully managed private cloud solution. “It was important from a virtual cloud standpoint that resources not be shared,” Cubberly said. “We trusted Hostway to help us engineer a complete, fully managed solution, and that's exactly what they did.”

The team designed and deployed a redundant environment that included multiple application and database servers, along with 10 terabytes of storage space. This platform configuration delivered the perfect balance of scalability needed to support the museum's plans to digitize their collection of artifacts and reliability needed for a mission-critical application of this type.

Once the new Hostway solution was deployed, The Henry Ford was able to turn off the old legacy environment, completing the migration to a new platform that better supported their long-term requirements. According to Cubberly, "The transition was seamless – I can't think of any challenges. It was very smooth, quite frankly."

AN IDEAL PARTNERSHIP WITH HOSTWAY

After weighing its options, The Henry Ford found that Hostway would be the best partner for its needs.

"We had a vision for what we wanted, and Hostway's solution was the most complete," Cubberly said.

Hostway worked extensively with The Henry Ford IT staff to refine the solution design, ensuring it would meet their specific requirements. Hostway helped ensure sufficient capacity would be available for the museum's current digitization initiative as well as future improvements.

Best of all, Hostway ensured that The Henry Ford would be able to utilize familiar technology. As a Microsoft shop, the organization needed a partner that could provide Microsoft-based solutions, and found this with Hostway.

"Performance-wise, the new environment is night and day from the old environment," Cubberly said. "We have the flexibility to spin it up and spin it down and do what we need to do. We've been very satisfied with the build-out, transition and ongoing support from Hostway."

VPC REFERENCE ARCHITECTURE

Traffic enters/exits through the Internet routing and aggregate switching layer

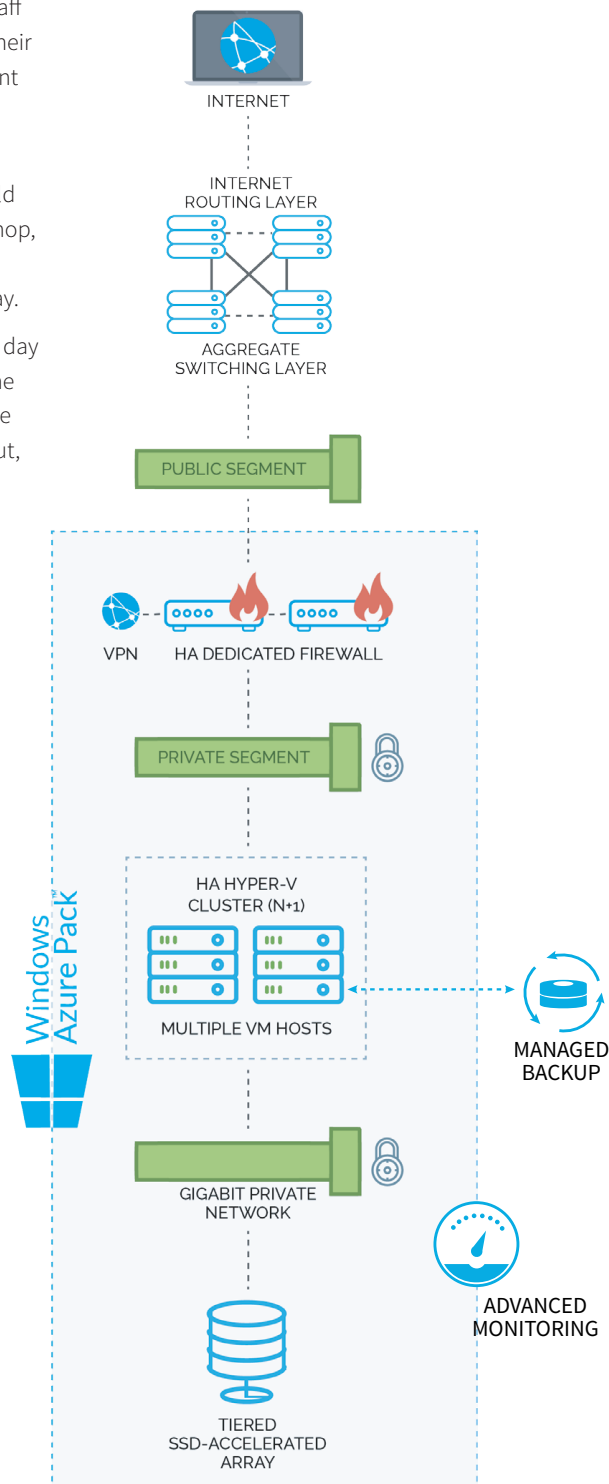
Microsoft Windows Azure Pack allows management of:

- Access to PowerShell cmdlets and the API for power users
- Easy to use UI providing access/configurability to all resources
- Templates expediting resource provisioning
- Firewall/Inbound rules, Virtual networking, segmentation and isolation

HA Dedicated firewalls allow for network isolation, VPN capabilities and faster speeds.

An advanced virtualized deployment includes dedicated servers running in a cluster for fault tolerance, each server configured with Windows Server 2012 R2 Hyper-V

Data is stored in a fully redundant storage array with 3-way mirroring. The storage array utilizes Microsoft Storage Spaces technology, surfaced to the virtual machines through Scale Out File Services



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