

CASE STUDY

KATAPULT BY KRYSTAL

“WE LOVED THE FACT THAT THERE WAS RENEWABLE POWER BEING GENERATED ON-SITE, BUT WE ALSO SAW IRON MOUNTAIN AS A LONGER-TERM MATCH DUE TO THEIR STANDARDS, THEIR ECOSYSTEMS AND THEIR LOCATION SPREAD

Founded in the UK in 2002, Krystal is a highly successful internet services company, hosting more than 200,000 websites for some 30,000 customers. Unlike most managed hosters, who customize a third-party cloud or resell a hyperscale solution, they built their own - Katapult.

“We have a problem-solving culture at Krystal, and we set about solving many of the problems people experience with the larger public clouds, which can be slow, clunky and difficult to manage,” says Simon Blackler, Krystal CEO & Founder. With Katapult, we built something that is simple to use but also incredibly fast, delivering millions of IOPs per VM (Input/Output Operations per Second per Virtual Machine). It spins up VMs in 25 seconds, and it's very resilient, with triple data redundancy on disk. It's also built from the best components. Our virtual disks run 128 slices distributed

across 128 NVMe (Non-Volatile Memory Express) disks - which means unbeatable read-and-writability.”

Katapult grew fast, running 4000 VMs by mid-2021. But to meet the needs of larger enterprises - and to capitalize on the solution's scalability - it needed to spin up an equally responsive and robust global architecture.

“Within a decade we aim to be one of the largest cloud providers in the UK, with a good foothold in the USA and other markets,” says Blackler.

“Considering the size of the competition it's very much a David and Goliath story, but we are already winning in certain areas.”

First on the list was the USA, where they started looking for a data center partner that met their technical needs and matched their values - *“honest, reliable, and personal”*. The perfect partner also had to meet their high ethical and environmental standards.

TEAMING UP TO TAKE ON THE WORLD

INDUSTRY:

Infrastructure as a Service

CHALLENGE:

A responsive, renewable-powered global platform for a new ultra-fast public cloud

SOLUTION:

Iron Mountain Data Centers

VALUE:

> Shared focus on renewables and sustainability

- > Industry-leading responsiveness, services and connectivity ecosystems
- > Global standards-based footprint

"Krystal exists to make a positive impact," says Blackler. "In 2017 we bore all the costs to convert our UK multi-tenant data center to renewables, and when it came to selecting a data center partner we weren't willing to go backwards. So, renewables were non-negotiable, and this whittled the field down very quickly. "We also needed a provider that had coverage - ideally someone that would allow Katapult to roll out worldwide with simple management. We didn't really want to have to be dealing with seven different data center providers in seven different locations."

Krystal's first choice was Iron Mountain Data Centers, specifically its New Jersey facility (NJE-1) which, as well as using 100% renewable power, runs a huge rooftop solar array.

"We loved the fact that there was renewable power being generated on-site, but we also saw Iron Mountain as a longer-term match due to their standards, their ecosystems and

their location spread," says Alex Easter, Krystal CTO. "We wanted a flexible partner that would listen to us, and that is what we got. Plus our pre-sales experience with Iron Mountain was great."

The New Jersey install was followed quickly by one in Phoenix (AZP-1), adding quick access to US markets on the West Coast and Midwest. A few months later Krystal also took space in Amsterdam (AMS-1). The IMDC Smart Hands service ended up being critical during these first installations.

"Pre-Covid we were going to deliver and build ourselves, but we couldn't. We needed a provider that could take a palletized delivery and provide a full rack and stack service. This wasn't a small or simple job - our installs are complicated. This was critical and the IMDC teams did very well. During the installs we have done so far the glitches have been tiny compared to what we expected."

Katapult is also now plugging into the diverse connectivity ecosystems in Iron Mountain's facilities.

"Currently we're using Iron Mountain's Direct Internet Access service in both New York and Phoenix," says Easter. "We also use GTT and Telia in both locations - our approach is to use a mix of tier 1s and 2s. We're also interested in any available eyeball-rich IXs, so we will sign up with AMS-IX as soon as we get to Amsterdam, and DE-CIX in New Jersey also looks like a good option." Future plans for Katapult include more sites in North America and Europe as well as a strategic location in Asia Pacific.

"We're investigating Singapore now," says Easter. "Based on our experiences so far we haven't looked much at the competition and our tendency is just to stick with Iron Mountain."

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