Business challenge

Higher-education institutions must meet evolving student expectations – but costly, inflexible on-prem systems are holding them back. How could Jenzabar help clients cut costs and gain agility?

Transformation

Using IBM® Cloud™ infrastructure, Jenzabar offers a transformational SaaS solution for student information systems, with comprehensive services that eliminate the need to run costly on-prem IT.

**Gus Ortiz
Managed Services
Program Manager
Jenzabar**

Business benefits:

Avoids
the time and cost associated with on-prem deployments

Enables
Jenzabar to make its business model far more scalable and secure

Paves
the way to international expansion and further commercial opportunities

Jenzabar
Cuts complexity and cost in higher education, and creates new business opportunities

Jenzabar provides higher education software solutions for colleges and universities worldwide, supporting over 1,300 campuses.

"The IBM methodology, delivery system, the client interface, the ability to scale – all those things that were essential to making IBM Cloud our first choice have remained in place."

Gus Ortiz
Managed Services Program Manager
Jenzabar

Share this

Enthusiasm for learning

Jenzabar is dedicated to the success of its clients in higher education, supporting more than 1,300 campuses around the world with tailored student-information software and related services. From enrollment to graduation, Jenzabar helps to streamline student and university administration and finance.

For institutions large and small, the growing cost and complexity of running an in-house IT infrastructure makes it an unwelcome distraction from the core business of education. Recognizing this, Jenzabar wanted to ease the pressure on its clients' technical resources, while at the same time helping institutions with legacy ERP struggling to meet growing student expectations.

To capitalize on this new opportunity, Jenzabar needed a flexible, robust, highly secure platform for delivering private software-as-a-service solutions to a growing number of clients. The international dimension was also important: Jenzabar wanted to cater to clients with specific compliance requirements regarding the location of data within national borders.

Gus Ortiz, Managed Services Program Manager at Jenzabar, explains, "As the business and our horizons grew, we wanted a scalable and reliable cloud platform that offered direct control over the computing, storage and network resources, so that we could respond rapidly to our hosted clients' needs. Without a standardized global platform for cloud services, we would not be able to scale the business to match our ambitions."

Journey to the cloud

Jenzabar reviewed offerings from leading global cloud service providers, ultimately choosing IBM Cloud. "The IBM methodology, delivery system, the client interface, the ability to scale – all those things that were essential to making IBM Cloud our first choice have remained in place," says Ortiz. "I also like knowing exactly where the equipment is located so that I can assure clients about their data."

Currently, Jenzabar is migrating its client environments to a private VMware vSphere virtualization platform running on IBM Cloud bare metal servers, a move designed to maximize resiliency and flexibility.

"With VMware Site Recovery Manager, we are setting up site-to-site replication across the IBM Cloud so that we can offer our clients very rapid recovery to a second data center as part of our standard service," comments Ortiz. "Our new approach on IBM Cloud bare metal servers also enables us to use less hardware, so our clients will get the additional security and privacy benefits of being hosted in a completely private cloud without seeing their costs rise."

Jenzabar continues to use IBM Cloud block storage and IBM Cloud file storage to store both live and backed-up data for its clients' ERP solutions, taking advantage of multiple high-speed connections to ensure exceptional performance and resiliency for data and applications. Through its Managed Services division, the company uses these features of the IBM Cloud to provide a backup-as-a-service offering to clients. Educational institutions use the service to back up and recover all kinds of systems, from on-prem servers and workstations to executive laptops – regardless of whether they use Jenzabar's SIS solutions. For the highest standards in throughput, security and low latency, Jenzabar offers IBM Cloud Direct Link, enabling clients to create private connections between their remote network environments and their IBM Cloud deployments to support hybrid workloads.

"We're promoting the cloud backup-as-a-service to anyone in higher education as part of a cyber-security offering, because offsite backup and retention are key elements in protecting against crypto locker and ransomware software," says Ortiz.

Since its method for backing up is to capture complete system images, Jenzabar can recover any client's workloads to new VMware virtual machines on IBM Cloud. This provides a complete disaster-recovery-as-a-service option, so that clients no longer need to maintain duplicate on-prem hardware that may never be used – a great advantage in the cost-sensitive higher-education industry.

"One client called to say that her on-prem systems had failed on a Friday evening before term started on Monday," says Ortiz. "With IBM Cloud bare metal servers, I was able to commission new capacity through the portal right away, and offer to migrate the data and start a free 60-day trial. She was so impressed that she signed up to the full service."

"Our new approach on IBM Cloud bare metal servers also enables us to use less hardware, so our clients will get the additional security and privacy benefits of being hosted in a completely private cloud without seeing their costs rise."

Gus Ortiz, Managed Services Program Manager, Jenzabar

Reaching new markets

Building its SaaS offering on IBM Cloud compute, storage and network infrastructure gives Jenzabar the scale, resilience, security, performance, flexibility and geographic reach to meet enterprise-class needs for a growing client base at highly competitive pricing. The ability to specify dedicated bare metal servers enables the company to own and manage its own private resources, adding the security and convenience typical of an in-house infrastructure to the flexible, cost-effective benefits of the cloud.

While dedicated to remaining a top SIS solution vendor in Higher Education, Jenzabar continues to expand its Managed Service offerings and utilizes the comprehensive range of solutions available on the IBM cloud. This service will eliminate the need for institutions to maintain their own IT infrastructure. Using the IBM Cloud removes the delays associated with specifying, ordering and deploying new hardware; all the team has to do is access the IBM Cloud portal and configure the appropriate resources.

"One of the really impressive aspects of IBM Cloud is the client portal, where we can order and manage the environment ourselves, in a fast, responsive way," says Ortiz. "Today, if a client needs another 12 TB of disk space, I can do that from my mobile in five minutes. The agility and responsiveness make IBM Cloud a real business enabler for Jenzabar."

With more than 60 data centers worldwide, the IBM Cloud network helps Jenzabar satisfy the local needs of clients in Africa, the Americas, Asia and Europe. If a client requires that data be retained within a specific geographic boundary, Jenzabar can specify the physical location of the resources. For example, one client is based outside the U.S., but for regulatory reasons needs their data to be retained within the lower 48 states – a simple click in the client portal made this possible. Ortiz says: "The configurability and management control offered by IBM Cloud bare metal servers enables us to grow our business in a way not previously possible."

Choosing IBM Cloud has simplified operations for Jenzabar, reducing costs and enabling it to serve a wider range of higher-education institutions more cost-effectively. In the past, the up-front hardware investment put Jenzabar solutions beyond financial reach for some smaller schools and colleges. Now, even institutions with fewer than one hundred students find it cost-effective to sign up for a Jenzabar SIS solution.

"IBM Cloud enables us to give smaller institutions access to computing resources they typically would not be able to afford or deploy on campus, backed by the most advanced security, scalability and flexibility," says Ortiz.

"For larger clients, we offer an escape route from outdated on-prem data centers with failing hardware and insufficient bandwidth, at a lower cost than they could achieve for themselves. These clients can save money while providing better services to a happier community of students and staff."

For new clients with no existing on-prem infrastructure, choosing a Jenzabar SIS solution on the IBM Cloud enables full focus on efficient student administration rather than the platform. "We took on a start-up school a few years back," recalls Ortiz. "They started in our cloud, stayed in our cloud, and have grown in our cloud from literally zero to 5,000 students, and we have scaled them as needed in a pay-as-you-go model."

Ortiz concludes: "By selecting IBM Cloud compute, storage and network infrastructure, we have opened up a wealth of opportunity, for streamlining our business, creating additional service options for clients, and for generating additional revenue streams through new service offerings. We are excited to see where the future will take us."

"The configurability and management control offered by IBM Cloud bare metal servers enables us to grow our business in a way not previously possible."

Gus Ortiz, Managed Services Program Manager, Jenzabar

Take the next step

To learn more about IBM Cloud bare metal servers, please contact your IBM representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit the following website: ibm.com/cloud/info/bare-metal

Connect with us