



INDUSTRY

Geospatial information systems

LOCATION

Norcross, Georgia

KEY CHALLENGES

- Limited in-house IT resources to support 24/7 service availability
- Inability to scale the IT infrastructure with business growth
- Managing its own service infrastructure was a distraction for the SmartNet product team

SOLUTION

The Leica Geosystems SmartNet product team migrated their internal VMware-based service infrastructure in the United States and Europe to the iland Enterprise Cloud Services platform, realizing significant improvements in reliability, scalability, and ease of management.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

- Easy scalability to accommodate rapid growth across the globe
- Rock-solid reliability and around-the-clock service
- Real-time virtual resource visibility



vCloud Air™ Network

Leica Geosystems Repositions for Global Growth with VMware-Based iland Cloud Services

When Leica Geosystems launched its SmartNet GPS reference network in North America, it didn't have the internal IT resources to deliver 24/7 availability to its customers, or to scale the service infrastructure with rapid business growth. By moving its VMware-based environment to the iland Enterprise Cloud Services infrastructure, the SmartNet business unit got the reliability its customers require around the globe, the scalability it needs to grow, and the freedom to focus on core business.

Leica Geosystems is a global supplier of products and systems for capturing, modeling, and mapping spatial information. One of the firm's newest business units is SmartNet, a global array of regional GPS reference networks that provide real-time kinematic (RTK) correction for high-precision GPS measurements (accurate within 1 centimeter). Using these networks, Leica provides subscription-based correction services to surveyors, engineers, builders, miners, farmers, and governments.

The Challenge

When Leica launched SmartNet North America, the product team initially set up their own servers in the firm's Norcross, Georgia, offices. However, SmartNet is a software-as-a-service offering, and Leica, primarily a physical product supplier, had neither the technical infrastructure nor the human resources to support a mission-critical service. Issues quickly arose around scalability and reliability.

"If we needed more capacity, we had to go through an asset request process in order to bring another server online," says Wendy Watson, director of reference station operations. "It was time-consuming and not conducive to the rapid scalability we needed."

The team tried moving their servers to a larger corporate office, but the absence of around-the-clock IT support at that facility undermined availability. "Once we realized that we couldn't run a 24/7 service in a 9-to-5 facility, we started looking for a service provider partner," says Tyler Collier, product manager for SmartNet North America. "We knew we needed scalability, reliability, and 24/7 support, and we also knew that we wanted to build on top of the VMware platform."

The Solution

After evaluating several potential providers, the SmartNet team found exactly what they needed in the iland Enterprise Cloud Services (ECS) platform. iland is an award-winning cloud hosting provider with eight globally distributed data centers. Founded in 1994, iland is a Premier VMware vCloud® Air™ Network Program partner and a winner of VMware Service Provider Partner of the Year awards in both the global and Americas categories.

The iland ECS infrastructure leverages the VMware vCloud Suite® and is fully compatible with users' internal VMware environments. It offers on-demand resources for production, test, development, and disaster recovery across North America, Europe, and Asia Pacific, all built with best-of-breed hardware and software.

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- Tyler Collier,
Product Manager,
SmartNet North America

VMWARE FOOTPRINT

- iland Enterprise Cloud Services, an infrastructure-as-a-service platform built on the VMware vCloud Suite.

APPLICATIONS VIRTUALIZED

- Leica Geosystems SmartNet GPS reference network

PARTNER

- iland

The iland ECS platform includes an iland-developed cloud management portal that enables users to easily ramp up cloud environments, predict costs, manage global resources, maximize performance, and address compliance. It provides real-time and historical visibility into the performance of each virtual machine, vApp (a collection of preconfigured virtual machines), and virtual data center (VDC) in a customer's environment. Capacity and utilization metrics as well as customizable alerts make it easy to identify and remedy potential issues, and backup/restore features help users protect against corruption or accidental deletion. Integrated disaster recovery functionality enables customers to test, failover, and failback with near-zero recovery times.

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Business Benefits

Leica Geosystems' SmartNet service business has grown by leaps and bounds; and the iland ECS platform has delivered the friction-free scalability necessary to support rising traffic volumes without bottlenecks or increased latency. Leica's European branch has also adopted iland's cloud services to advance its global operations and “follow-the-sun” customer support. “One of the most important reasons for us to standardize on the iland platform is to do global network support,” Watson says. “Then when we're offline here in North America, Europe and Australia can take over.”

“VMware technology available through the iland ECS portal has allowed us to address our growth challenge. It allows us to take templates and spool up new virtual machines very quickly to meet customer needs,” Collier says.

Two features of iland ECS have been critical in helping the SmartNet team meet the availability expectations of its customers. One is iland's support for VMware vSphere® vMotion® software, which allows the movement of entire running virtual machines from one physical host to another in the event of hardware failure without interruption or downtime. Another is the availability of redundant facilities to easily support business continuity. “We have our primary North American operations in iland's Reston, Virginia, facility and a failover facility set up in Los Angeles,” Collier explains.

Another advantage of SmartNet's cloud migration is improved visibility into its virtual environment through the iland ECS portal. “The portal gives visibility that we didn't have previously,” Collier says. “We can see resource allocation, workload distribution, even cost projections, all at a glance.”

Perhaps the most liberating aspect of SmartNet's move to the iland cloud has been freeing up the product team to refocus their energies on core business activities. iland's customer support model plays a key role here. Watson notes, “From the beginning, iland's support has been incredible. The response time and quality of support is beyond any of our expectations. For anyone looking to leverage cloud, make sure you find a partner that will work with you to understand your challenges and that will give you the attention to get you where you want to be. It's what iland is to us.”

“Leica Geosystems' SmartNet offering exemplifies the innovative, agile applications that cloud makes possible, and we are proud to team with them to provide the technology and support they need to deliver superior services to their end users around the globe,” says Dante Orsini, senior vice president of business development at iland. “Our longtime collaboration with VMware has been key, and we will continue to leverage their best-of-breed technologies to enable customers to grow their businesses quickly and securely.”

Looking Ahead

Leica is currently evaluating an upgrade of the Los Angeles failover environment to an active secondary site that would mirror all content in the Virginia facility.

