



SANTIKOS BRINGS CUTTING-EDGE CINEMA TO TEXAS WITH MANAGED SECURITY AND FANATICAL SUPPORT FOR AWS

Santikos Entertainment relies on Rackspace's security experts and certified AWS engineers to deliver a movie-going experience that fits the digital age.

BUSINESS

A regional movie theater chain based in San Antonio, Texas that boasts the two largest movie screens in the state, and the first all-laser digital theater in the world.

CHALLENGES

Santikos required a secure, online ticketing system that was PCI compliant and could scale when needed. The company ended up undergoing a larger transformation that included automated drink and snack bars, bowling and on-site ticket kiosks.

SOLUTION

Fanatical Support® for AWS and Rackspace Managed Security

OUTCOME

Santikos has maintained its position as the movie theater of choice for central Texans by accommodating a growing customer preference for online interactions and an automated movie-going experience with cutting-edge, laser-digital technology.



CUSTOMER CASE STUDY



INTRODUCTION

More than 100 years ago, Louis Santikos, an immigrant from Greece, began opening small movie theaters across San Antonio. Little did he know, the business he was building would grow into one of the largest family-owned theater chains in the country.

His son, John, who eventually took over from his father and continued growing the business, knew that staying in-step with technology was the only way to offer the type of movie-going experience his customers demanded. In the 1950s, that meant showing films in color, by the 1980s, it was adding Dolby Digital Stereo across the theater chain.

In recent years, the Santikos brand has stayed tech-savvy by focusing on two areas: the ticketing process, which is now automated online and optimized for high-traffic, and the movie screen itself, which features a proprietary, laser-digital projection system.

Where possible, Santikos has automated many of the processes inside their theaters as well, from the drink and snack bars and bowling alleys included in some larger theaters, to the projection room itself, where films are shown using a hard drive inserted into the projector (no more messy tape reels).

“WHAT WE WERE LOOKING FOR WAS A PROVIDER OF A VERY IMPORTANT CORE SERVICE TO US. WE SAW RACKSPACE AS BEING A BEST-IN-CLASS PROVIDER OF THAT. MORE IMPORTANTLY, OUR GOAL WAS TO FIND A TECHNOLOGY PARTNER. SOMEONE WHO WOULD NOT ONLY HELP US SERVE OUR EXISTING NEEDS AND ADDRESS OUR CURRENT VULNERABILITIES BUT ALSO SOMEONE THAT WOULD WORK WITH US TO HELP ANTICIPATE TECHNOLOGY CHANGES.”

DAVID HOLMES :: CEO, SANTIKOS ENTERTAINMENT

Throughout this transformation, the Santikos IT team worked with Rackspace to leverage the speed and agility of AWS and to make sure its online platform was secure and PCI compliant.

With the ability to confidently process a growing number of online transactions, host the latest and greatest in film projection and treat customers to a one-of-a-kind theater experience, Santikos has successfully transitioned into the new, digital age of cinema.

MOVIE SCREENS BIG ENOUGH FOR TEXAS

The most recent addition to the Santikos chain is the [Casa Blanca Theatre](#), home to the two largest movie screens in Texas (they both stand at five stories high and 90 feet wide). The Casa Blanca is also the first theater in which every screen is laser-digital. In fact, it's the first all-laser digital theater in the world.

“Laser digital is something that's difficult to describe,” says Santikos CEO David Holmes. “You kind of have to see it to understand it. It's on a much bigger platform and instead of having the old technology where the system is passing light through an aperture, this is a laser-generated image.”

The theater is also fully digital. There is no box office; tickets are purchased online or from a kiosk at the theater entrance and every seat is reserved.

“All of this was done to ensure the smoothest experience for our guests,” says Holmes. “We know people prefer to interact with us electronically, and we know it makes for a better overall experience in our theaters.”

Even before breaking ground, the Santikos IT team looked to Rackspace for help navigating the challenges that would be a part of a project this large.

“We're good at a lot of things,” says Holmes, “but looking ahead and looking around corners and figuring out what technology challenges we'll have tomorrow – that's why we value our partnership with Rackspace.”

TICKET SALES AWAKEN

Soon after Santikos had implemented its new online platform, “Star Wars: The Force Awakens” hit theaters nationwide. Online ticket sales spiked across the country, and while several large ticketing websites crashed due to high traffic, this was the test Santikos had been preparing for.

“We slowed, but never went down,” says Holmes. “It became a record day of ticket sales and we knew we were ready for a higher volume of transactions.”

That higher traffic volume also underscored the need for secure, PCI-compliant online transactions, and Rackspace security experts played an integral role in setting up a system that was safe for customers and their critical data.

And with Rackspace support and expertise informing their AWS workloads, the Santikos IT team was able to move forward with confidence.

“We really saw the AWS platform as an important tool because it had the robust, dynamic aspects we were looking for to really be able to scale,” says Santikos CIO Scott Iden.

“On top of that, Rackspace's influence was key because that's where the management of the system came into play. We knew we weren't the experts in this field, and we recognized Rackspace is. We really saw this as an opportunity to lean on the advantages they brought.”

Tied together with the Fanatical Support his team received from their Rackspace counterparts, Iden added that he wasn't sure how they would have proceeded without that added edge.

“Working with Rackspace enabled Santikos to achieve our goals,” Iden says. “They’re technology goals, but they’re directly tied to the larger vision this company holds.”

Since going through their digital transformation, Santikos has continued to enjoy steady growth in online transactions and zero downtime – even during huge events. And as the company looks to the future, central Texans can expect to see additional Santikos theaters popping up.

“As we continue to take our existing portfolio and upgrade it, not only from a technology platform but from a guest comfort and an ease-of-service platform, we’re also going to look at some new locations,” Holmes says.

“There are parts of our market that are underserved and we would like to provide the Santikos experience to those parts of the market as well.”

“TECHNOLOGY IS EVER-CHANGING. THE WAY IT HAS TO INTEGRATE FROM ONE PLATFORM TO THE WEBSITE TO WHAT HAPPENS INSIDE THE THEATER, IT ALL HAS TO TIE TOGETHER AND IT HAS TO WORK WITHOUT A HICCUP. WE REALLY SEE OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH RACKSPACE AS A KEY PIECE OF MAKING THAT WORK.”

SCOTT IDEN :: CIO, SANTILOS ENTERTAINMENT

ABOUT RACKSPACE

Rackspace, the #1 managed cloud company, helps businesses tap the power of cloud computing without the complexity and cost of managing it on their own. Rackspace engineers deliver specialized expertise, easy-to-use tools, and Fanatical Support® for leading technologies developed by AWS, Google, Microsoft, OpenStack, VMware and others. The company serves customers in 120 countries, including more than half of the FORTUNE 100. Rackspace was named a leader in the 2015 Gartner Magic Quadrant for Cloud-Enabled Managed Hosting, and has been honored by Fortune, Forbes, and others as one of the best companies to work for.

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PACKETFUSION



Connecting the Dots to the Cloud