



AltexSoft sky-rockets to the «clouds» with Windows Azure

Review

Country: Ukraine

Industry: Information technologies

About company

AltexSoft is engaged on custom software development. Main clients are from the USA and European Union. Since 2007 AltexSoft has created 35 software projects in scope more than six months. There are 30 workers in the company's office in Kharkiv.

Situation

The company needed an experience in developing cloud applications.

Solution

Development of experimental cloud service for social search using Microsoft SQL Azure.

Advantages

- Gain of valuable experience in cloud applications development
- Acceleration of solution's development
- Low capital investments
- Fast time to market

“Windows Azure has many advantages which let developers focus on the logic of the application itself and forget about technical problems”

Alexander Medovoy, CEO at AltexSoft

AltexSoft – is Ukrainian software development company from Kharkiv, which is engaged on projects mainly for the clients from the USA and Europe. Observing the great opportunity for cloud applications market, our company took a decision to make a project which would become an example for customers and let the company gain essential experience in new technologies. For these reason AltexSoft has developed an experimental cloud service called “Search2Social” for Internet search with social networks integration. The project uses Bing and Microsoft SQL Azure for requests processing. Deploying the application in just an hour and a half allowed AltexSoft to see the advantages of new cloud technologies: acceleration of development, low capital investments, fast time to market.



“In the next 3 year we expect considerable demand on development of new and adapting of existing software for clouds”

Nikolay Pavlov, CMO at AltexSoft.

Situation

AltexSoft is engaged on custom software development. Main clients are from the USA and European Union. Since 2007 AltexSoft has created 35 software projects in scope more than six months. There are 30 workers in AltexSoft now. The office is situated in the center of Kharkiv.

AltexSoft tries to support so-called geek-engineer culture and so it supports its workers in their aspiration to excellence, to studying and using the most advanced technologies. AltexSoft is very attentive to new tendencies of the market, according to which the technological way of the company is purposefully chosen.

Working with customers AltexSoft has noticed their potential interest to the applications which use SaaS model (Software-as-a-Service) — a so-called cloud application.

“Our company has observed the services of cloud calculations for a long time. This is a prospective niche for us and we expect considerable demand on development of new and adapting of existing software for clouds” - says Nikolay Pavlov, CMO at AltexSoft.

But to outrun competitors it is not enough to announce a support of solution on the base on one or another technology. The company understood, that this requires training of the specialists, gaining real working experience and even better — showing successfully done project. This is exactly the most cogent argument for customers.

“As we had no appropriate orders at that moment, we decided to make an experimental project with our engineers and system architects”. A “Proof of Concept”, which integrates Microsoft Bing, Windows Azure and social search. We called this project “[Search2Social](#)” - remembers Nikolay Pavlov.

Solution

In the beginning of 2010 it became clear to AltexSoft, that clouds would become an essential part of the future in the Internet, the predecessors of which were hosting services. The company actively observed existing players of the market - Amazon EC2, Google Apps Engine, RackSpace and Windows Azure... “At that time Amazon company worked actively with its service “Elastic Compute Cloud”, and the amount of publications on this topic in different specialized media had seriously increased,” - remembers Alexander Medovoy, the director of AltexSoft. - “But as they say, you can’t know until you try.”

In the beginning of 2010 Microsoft announced launching of a new cloud - Windows Azure and AltexSoft took a decision not to postpone the case on the back burner and to allocate resources for creating an experimental social searching service “[Social2Search](#)”.

According to the leaders of AltexSoft, three factors played a decisive role in choosing Windows Azure as a platform for cloud calculations:

- High level of integration of Windows Azure cloud service into Microsoft Visual Studio development

“Concerning the fact, that we dealt with cloud computing for the first time, the whole process of deployment in cloud was rather short — just an hour and a half”

Alexander Medovoy, CEO at AltexSoft

environment, which simplifies and accelerates delivery of the software to potential customers.

- Previous positive work experience of our engineering team with Microsoft products, which seriously decreased the threshold of coming to hi-tech market of cloud applications based on Windows Azure.
- Attractive conditions of using MSDN Premium subscription - Visual Studio 2010 Premium, which provides free use up to 750 hours processor time in Azure per month.

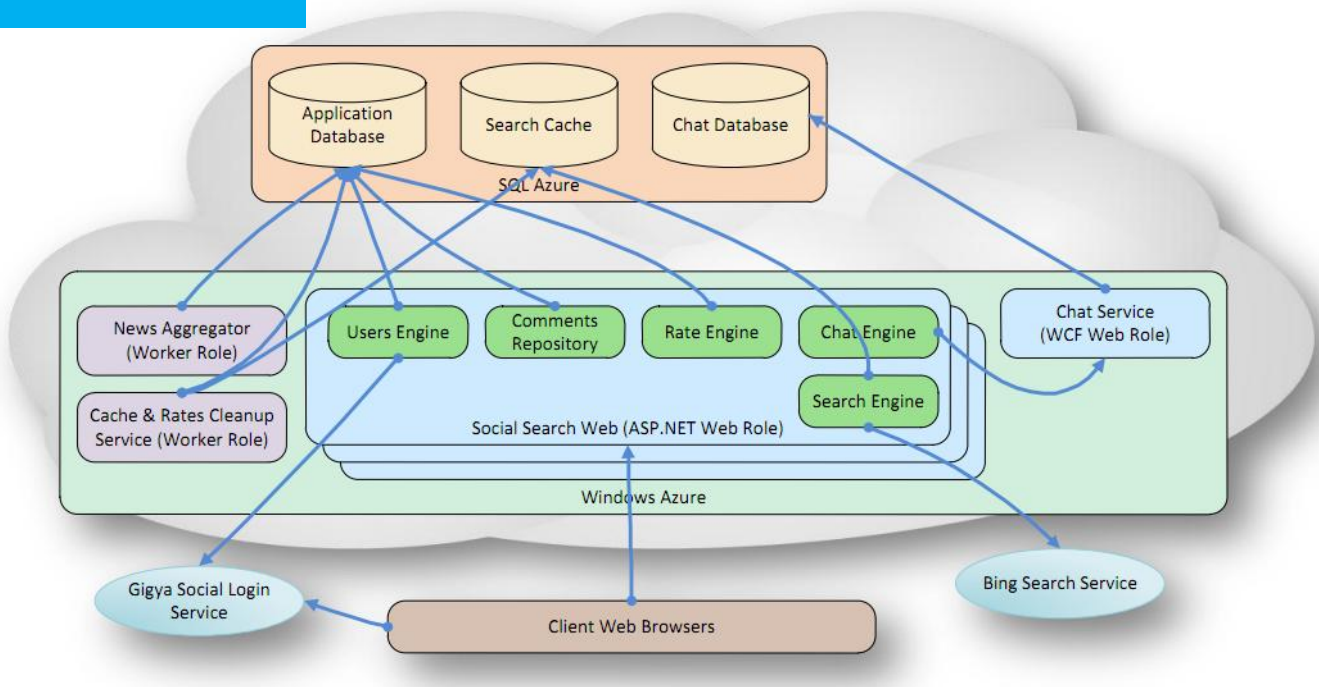
centers, which have the fastest access to the Internet.

The total duration of the “[Search2Social](#)” project was 300 days. “Concerning the fact that we dealt with cloud computing for the first time, the whole process of deployment in “cloud” was rather short — hour and a half” - admits Alexander Medovoy, CEO at AltexSoft.

For implementation of the project AltexSoft used one more Microsoft technology - Bing search engine. It carries a function of search requests procession in the project.

AltexSoft substantiates its choice by excellent speed of Bing search engine. This is because both Bing and Windows Azure are situated in the area of Microsoft data

Picture 1 – Scheme of «Search2Social» project’s system architecture.



“Windows Azure gave us cloud infrastructure ready for use without expensive investments — exactly what the developers need.”

Alexander Medovoy, CEO at AltexSoft

Advantages

Using Microsoft cloud services AltexSoft has developed an experimental service “Search2Social” for Internet search with social networks integration. Requests processing is provided by the Bing search engine and cloud service for data processing by the Microsoft SQL Azure.

Integration of the technology let the company gain new valuable experience and feel the advantages of new Microsoft cloud technologies: acceleration of development process, low capital investments, fast time to market.

Gaining valuable experience in cloud application development

The team of system architects and software engineers of AltexSoft got needed examination and experience in developing SaaS-services, which give the company additional advantages in competition.

“The most important advantage for us is that now AltexSoft is ready to provide services in new cloud application development and migration of existing apps to Windows Azure. We added a successful project to our company’s portfolio in strategically important market niche of cloud computing and “Data Mining” - admits Alexander Medovoy, CEO at AltexSoft.

Acceleration of solutions development

According to AltexSoft’s software engineers, Windows Azure service favorably distinguishes from other similar solutions because it requires minimal participation in setting and control.

“Unlike Microsoft IIS, here you can do everything just from Visual Studio

development environment. The service is easily zoomed and the process of creation of projects based on ASP.NET has just a few differences from traditional software development. Tools for data control SQL Server Management Studio 2008 R2 works absolutely transparently both with local DBMS and with SQL Azure” - admits Vasily Novikov, software engineer at AltexSoft.

Low capital investments

Usage of Windows Azure let the company avoid great costs connected with hardware part of the project.

“Investments in hardware infrastructure and software environment for implementation of our project could make hundred thousand US dollars” - says Alexander Medovoy. - “But thanks to participating in Microsoft BizSpark program, we got not only free access to technologies and products of Microsoft, but also support on the stage of deployment and implementation. And Windows Azure gave us cloud infrastructure ready for use without expensive investments — exactly what the developers need.”

Fast time to market

Using Windows Azure platform not only shortens the time of application deployment. Instead of configuring new physical servers for satisfying growing computation needs AltexSoft uses unlimited computing powers and possibilities of data storage of Windows Azure platform. This gives an opportunity to focus on developing the applications themselves and on doing business. Thus, for example, thanks to Windows Azure applications, can be deployed literally by 3-5 clicks, and bringing to a working state can be performed just by one mouse click.

Additional information

Information about other projects realized on the basis of Microsoft corporation technologies is available here:

www.microsoft.com/ukraine/casestudies

(in Ukrainian), or

www.microsoft.com/rus/business/casestudies (in Russian), or

www.microsoft.com/resources/casestudies (In English).

For additional information about

products and services of Microsoft in

Ukraine please call informational center

of Microsoft Corporation:

+38 (044) 230 51 01 or by e-mail

ukraine@microsoft.com.

Addresses of Microsoft Corporation in

the Internet: www.microsoft.com (in

English), www.microsoft.ua

(in Ukrainian).

For more details about the services of

AltexSoft please call: (US) +1917-310-

0922, (UK) +4420-755-88131, e-mail:

sales@altexsoft.com or visit web-site:

<http://www.altexsoft.com>.

“Windows Azure platform has many advantages, which let the developers to focus on the logic of an application itself and forget about technical problems,”- summarizes Alexander Medovoy, CEO at AltexSoft.

Windows Azure platform

Windows Azure platform provides a first-class basis for expansion of products and services in the Internet.

Its main components include:

- **Microsoft SQL Azure.** Microsoft SQL Azure provides the first relational and self-managing database service in cloud based on Microsoft SQL Server technology.
- **Windows Azure.** Windows Azure – is a cloud based development environment for service allocation and management. Windows Azure provides for software developers computing power and storages in Microsoft datacenters for allocation, scaling and managing applications in the Internet on demand.
- **Windows Azure App Fabric.** Besides, Windows Azure processes the connection requests by these services:
 - *App Fabric Service Bus* connects services and applications for simplifying distributed application development.
 - *App Fabric Access Control* provides access management for REST web-services.

For more information about Windows Azure platform please visit Internet site www.windowsazure.com.

Software

■ Products

- Windows Azure
- Microsoft SQL Azure
- Microsoft Visual Studio 2010

■ Technologies

- Bing
- Microsoft .NET Framework 3.5