



Bending the Spoon: How ECW Beat the Storm

Partner Profile



Company

ECW Computers

Country

United States

Services

Network and IT solutions

Client Profile

Environment:

Servers

Solution:

StorageCraft Cloud Services

It had winds exceeding 150 miles per hour. It was big, dangerous, and fast approaching the Atlantic coast of the United States. Its name was Matthew.

Hurricane Matthew began its wake of destruction as a tropical storm, damaging Caribbean islands as it gained more strength. Quickly, Matthew became a powerful category 1 hurricane. Within another 24 hours, it was category 5. Matthew was the costliest Atlantic hurricane to make landfall in the United States since Hurricane Sandy in 2012ⁱ, and it was barreling toward Deerfield Beach on the Florida coast where ECW Networks is headquartered.

Before the Storm Raged

Flashback to a year earlier and Eric Weast, the owner and operator of ECW, is trying to move more of his clients to StorageCraft® Cloud Services™. Eric created ECW in 2004 and steadily grew with great year over year progress. In 2008, they began providing clients with managed services covering everything from firewalls to anti-virus and of course, backup and disaster recovery.

StorageCraft.
Cloud Services™ 

In 2012, Eric and ECW made the switch to StorageCraft after running into too many problems with a competitive solution. “StorageCraft is really reliable,” he says, “Before STC we were chasing a lot of backup issues, we had backup failures and the backups took a very long time. Since we switched we’ve been able to unify our backup footprint and move clients to the cloud product.”

While ECW uses a little bit of everything from the product line (from StorageCraft ShadowProtect® to StorageCraft ImageManager™ and StorageCraft ShadowControl™), Eric has been moving more and more clients to the cloud. Knowing how powerful some storms can be, he wants to make sure his clients are protected. “[Cloud Services] definitely make things easier for us and give us peace of mind that we can actually do same-day recoveries for clients and get them fully up and running if their office completely blows away,” he says.

So far, the response from clients has been great. ECW has about 120 machines in the cloud and is hoping to have that number up to 200 in the next few months. These big machine moves are happening largely because Eric had the chance to see the level of service StorageCraft offers their cloud customers.

Having seen several storms hammer the eastern seaboard, Eric knew how critical it was for clients to have secondary cloud backups that can take over operations if the worst happens. His clients, however, were sometimes more difficult to convince.

An Untimely Proposal

While Eric has had success moving his clients to the StorageCraft cloud, there were some that just weren't sure the expense was worth it. "We had a proposal for StorageCraft Cloud to a client for about a year and they hadn't made a decision," says Eric. The client took their time thinking about the proposal, and eventually, Hurricane Matthew entered the scene.

Matthew began gaining strength and was heading right toward the East coast. "We started seeing weather predictions that Matthew was going to hit client locations in a few days," says Eric. With the storm on their doorstep, Eric's clients grew worried and after a year of uncertainty, they finally reached out to discuss his proposal. But by now, time was running out. "When the client called they said they needed 30 servers in the cloud and they needed them there in 3 days to beat the storm," Eric says, "The circumstances made it seem impossible. When they asked if I could do it, initially I said, 'well, no.'"

Under the best conditions, machines would be moved into the cloud well ahead of a large storm or other disaster—particularly when you never know when disasters might happen. With time getting shorter, he called StorageCraft to see if they could help.

StorageCraft Steps it up

Usually, there's a set process for seeding backup data to the StorageCraft Cloud. First, StorageCraft would send seed drives to ECW. There, techs would fill them with backup data, then mail them back to the StorageCraft data centers. Once back at StorageCraft, they sit in a queue and wait their turn to be uploaded.

With shipping time and all the processes involved in getting data uploaded, Eric wasn't sure whether the data would be seeded in time and he couldn't risk not having his client's data in the cloud in case they needed it. Luckily, Bronson Aber, StorageCraft's Cloud Services Product Manager, had a plan.

Eric explains, "Since we had to do it on the fly, Bronson let us use our own seed drives to get the client data seeded. This is not something they normally do, but because of how critical the situation was, they made an exception so we could get client's data seeded to the cloud more quickly."

Eric and his team were able to get the seed drives filled and sent over to StorageCraft headquarters with some help from the StorageCraft team. "Bronson was on the phone with us in the middle of the night just to check in and make sure everything was working out and we had our seeds ready to go," Eric says.

Given the gravity of the situation, StorageCraft decided to make another exception and move Eric's seed drives to the front of the line to get them in the cloud before the storm hit. With a little luck and some quick action, StorageCraft and ECW got the client's data into the cloud just in time. "They were able to give it priority to have the data spooled up into the data center just before the hurricane arrived. Thanks to Bronson Aber, Kevin Uttich, Tim Bennion, and everyone on our team at StorageCraft, we were able to make it happen," Eric says.



A Lucky Break

For many, Hurricane Matthew was severe. In total, Matthew did \$10.5 billion in damageⁱ. Luckily, however, Eric and most of his clients were fortunate enough to escape most of the damage. Even still, they were happy to have StorageCraft at the ready. As Eric puts it, “There were some locations impacted by the storm. We didn’t end up needing to go live in the cloud because the storm’s impact was minimal, but we would’ve been ready even if it was much worse, and now we’re ready for anything else that might happen.”

All in all, Eric is happy knowing backups are safe and that his clients are ready to recover. “[The StorageCraft Cloud] really gives us peace of mind,” he says, “Anything else can happen and you’re ok, but if you lose data, you’re done. That’s why our number one priority is making sure it’s protected—it’s the only thing you can’t really get back or re-create. We feel protected now.”

About StorageCraft

When StorageCraft opened its doors in December 2003, they built the brand on a foundation of industry knowledge, strong leadership, and a background in driver development, storage consultation, and developer toolkits. Today, StorageCraft Technology Corporation is a global company with excellent revenue growth, talented employees, a mature line of award-winning business continuity products, and a worldwide network of successful channel partners and resellers. They operate from their corporate headquarters in Draper, Utah, and international offices in Ireland, Japan, and Australia.

About ECW

ECW Computers is a privately owned and operated information technology company serving clients across the nation and internationally. Headquartered in Deerfield Beach, FL, they specialize in providing unique, specially-tailored IT solutions to businesses across South Florida.

They’re committed to ensuring clients receive technological support that not only fixes any IT problems they experience, but also helps them leverage their technology to take their business to the next level. ECW’s team of experts work hard to provide businesses with simple, effective solutions to how to use IT properly, and we make sure that your tech is working for you, never against you.

i https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hurricane_Matthew

ii https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_costliest_Atlantic_hurricanes



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