

Global media company tunes into cloud migration



AT A GLANCE

Turner Broadcasting System wanted to support digital consumption of its content, which meant shifting from on-premises infrastructure to a cloud service. Turner’s chosen cloud service provider, Amazon Web Services (AWS), recommended Flexera’s cloud migration solution. Less than six months after scanning the company’s infrastructure, Turner migrated workloads to the cloud. The scan also uncovered hundreds of unused servers Turner didn’t know were running.



The challenge

Focus on their core business by shifting from on-premises IT infrastructure to the cloud

Turner Broadcasting System, a semi-independent division of Time Warner, owns and operates various cable television networks, including CNN, TBS, HLN, TNT, TruTV and Bleacher Report. Turner is shifting their core business to support the digital distribution of content to viewers. Turner saw moving to the public cloud as the way forward. While the on-premises model worked for the company in the past, Turner had needed to shift to digital distribution and consumption of content. The company realized that by changing the way they do business, they also had to change how they thought about IT operations and processes.

“One of the things we changed our philosophy on was that it wasn’t imperative for Turner to be in the data center business to be a successful company,”

said Don Browning, vice president of cloud architecture for Turner Broadcasting System. Turner was looking to break the organizational barriers that existed in their on-premises environment so they could support the new business model. As they began planning for the changes, Turner realized they

“The very first question I asked was: ‘How much money do we spend on our data centers?’ And there was no answer.”

Don Browning

Vice president of cloud architecture,
Turner Broadcasting System

didn't have any metrics for their internal systems. Migrating to the cloud was deemed a necessary strategic task. And they required detailed knowledge

of their on-premises environment to migrate to the cloud successfully.



The solution

Implement a fast, comprehensible migration plan

Turner knew of other organizations that had completed similar migrations to AWS, and wanted to learn from those examples. They determined AWS was the only cloud provider that offered the depth and scale needed for their project. Moving to AWS would allow Turner to gain business agility while reducing the hours and costs they had been incurring from their on-premises data centers. Turner also was looking for a flexible and scalable environment that could grow with their business.

“Prior to bringing Flexera in...we had no idea. Once we completed the scan...I knew how many servers we had, I knew where they were, I knew what they talked to, I knew at what capacity they were running, I knew what they would be when they would go to AWS.”

Don Browning

After they chose AWS, Turner started to develop a migration plan. The planning process proved to be difficult, as the organization was unsure what their current infrastructure looked like and how it worked. Turner spent three months trying to develop a migration plan for the infrastructure they didn't fully understand.

AWS recommended that Turner use Flexera to help the organization gain a better understanding of their IT environment. Turner realized that Flexera could help them create a plan for migrating to AWS. Without more in-depth insight into their infrastructure, Turner wouldn't have been able to execute the migration process as quickly as they had.



The results

From scan to migrations, the entire process was completed in five months

When the application scan was complete, Turner utilized Flexera to validate the dependencies between the applications. Turner created two buckets of resources to move: cloud-ready and not cloud-ready. The cloud-ready resources were the applications and databases that didn't have many interconnections or dependencies with other system processes. Once these were sorted, Turner was able to formulate a migration plan that started with moving the easier-to-lift, cloud-ready resources first. The team then created proof-of-concept migrations and a cost analysis of the 3-5 years after migration.

After seeing the difference between the cost of operating on AWS and maintaining the existing on-premises infrastructure, Turner launched pilot migrations for cloud-ready applications chosen from various departments. The pilot migrations were successful, and Turner's IT team began the full migration process. The entire process took only a few months, from the initial scan in February 2016 to the migrations in July 2016.

The scan revealed almost 1,000 servers that Turner was running but not using. In one instance, an area of the organization had 114 active servers

**1,000 IDLE
SERVERS**
DISCOVERED AND RETIRED

that weren't being utilized. Turner shut down those servers within ten minutes of completing the scan. Flexera helped Turner analyze their subdivisions and break down the entire migration into small parts. Turner also discovered more than 10,000 devices and mapped more than 600 applications. Turner went from knowing almost nothing about their infrastructure to discovering everything.

Turner continued migrating their cloud-ready resources in the early part of 2017. The owners of the applications were responsible for migrating their resources to AWS. Later in 2017, the company began migrating legacy servers and those with multiple dependencies.

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your company's
cloud journey

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