VenuesWest Case Study

Trusted secure cloud sets the stage for
digital transformation

Insight

VENUES WEST

Major sport organisation gains critical security for entire team with Azure whether on the road or office

VenuesWest is a Perth based organisation that owns 13 venues and manages seven of these on behalf of the Western Australia State Government, including RAC Arena and Optus Stadium. Hosting close to 2,000 events and welcoming over five million patrons last financial year, VenuesWest focuses on ensuring world class experiences for customers, partners, athletes and performers.

High performance sports demand high performance security

"Securing world class sporting and entertainment events is challenging in a competitive marketplace and even more so for the world's most isolated capital city which needs to overcome the cost of touring and presenting live productions. More than ever before, venues that are unable to meet rapidly shifting consumer expectations find themselves at a competitive disadvantage." - **Steve Paul**, Director of Corporate Services, VenuesWest

VenuesWest increasingly requires world class technology solutions to match patron expectations, to meet employee needs, deliver operational efficiencies as well as value for money, and support the rapid innovation required to remain competitive.

As such, VenuesWest is undergoing a three-year digital transformation designed to improve user and customer experience; underpin better decision making through accurate data; enhance the security of the organisation; and ensure engagement with VenuesWest audiences.

Key to this is having the right foundation to enable digital transformation while ensuring operational security and establishing a safe environment for executives, employees, and partners.

VenuesWest chose Insight, as their strategic technology partner, to transition from on-premise infrastructure to Microsoft Azure cloud and embrace a secure mobile-first approach to technology, stripping friction from VenuesWest's IT team.

Championing digital transformation dreams

"Like Microsoft's goal to empower every person and business on the planet to achieve more, we have a similar company mission to champion athletes' dreams and win together."

Steve Paul, Director of Corporate Services, VenuesWest

VenuesWest supports high-performance sports by reinvesting all profits back into training programs for athletes, from children's first skating program to facilitating Olympic-level sport.
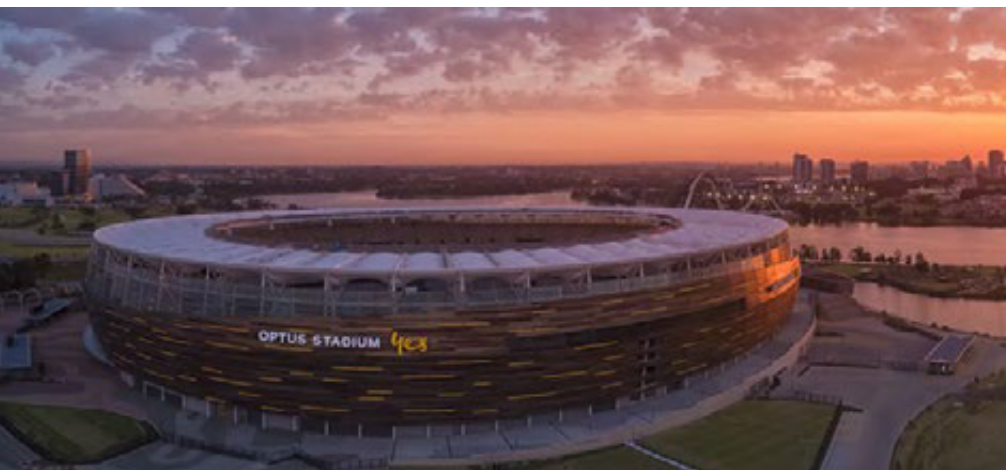
Business drivers for VenuesWest:

VenuesWest's digital transformation is aligned to the WA Government ICT strategy for cloud adoption, as well as driven by a number of factors including the phishing and social engineering attempts experienced by the organisation in recent times.

Embracing leading edge cloud and security technologies keeps VenuesWest on the front line in a fiercely competitive sector.

The datacentre is no longer the perimeter, a person's identity is

By transitioning workloads out of its on-premise data centre to Microsoft Azure, VenuesWest can rely on a high performing, resilient, secure and trusted infrastructure that can be accessed anytime, anywhere.

Windows 10 devices and Microsoft 365, with built-in security, provides flexibility without operational compromise to executives and employees, while Azure Active Directory manages access, to ensure integrity.

Identity-based protection:

- Secure single sign-on and self-service identity management capabilities for 1000's of cloud and on-premises apps with a single identity managed and protected

- Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) for user sign-ins and transactions to add an additional security layer

- Secure remote access for on-premises apps without using a virtual private network (VPN)

- Identity protection with machine learning-based threat detection and calculations of risk severity for every user and sign-in attempt

- Risk-based conditional access through an intelligent assessment of granting or blocking access and automatic protection from future threats

- Discovery and restriction of privileged identities and their access to resources (i.e. time limited "Just in Time" admin access) with Privileged Identity Management

> "Instead of looking at multiple, single point solutions, we're looking for platforms that we can really enable a business. That's the takeaway to me, is step back, look at the big picture, look at it as a platform play and not just individual point solutions."
>
> **Richard Bean,** CIO, VenuesWest

VenuesWest tracks security progress using Office 365 Secure Score and Azure Security Centre:

- Achieved Office 365 secure score of 320 - almost 5 times the average score for government tenants

- Achieved Windows secure score of 450 – 3 times the average score for government tenants

- Achieved Identity secure score of 110 – 3 times the average score for government tenants

Improved security posture by re-thinking and modernising ICT architecture with Azure.

VenuesWest has deployed Advanced Threat Protection along with 'self service' password reset through Azure Active Directory. Multifactor authentication through Azure Active Directory is now also managing access to other cloud-based applications and ensuring group-wide security while reducing operational friction.

The focus on world-class security has seen the deployment of Windows Defender on servers and roll out of Windows 10. VenuesWest has reset passwords in line with NIST (National Institute of Standards and Technology) recommendations for 16 characters, and has deployed Azure Key Vault.

Focus on what's important

"If we need to move faster, then we need to embrace automation and because we're so small, not only do we need to embrace automation, but we also need to be smart about where we spend our resources.

I can say to executives and employees: 'Okay, we've got all these botnets. We've got all these command and control servers trying to access our services.' That's a very visual thing for them so they can understand. They can see that in the last 30 days, we've had 11,000 botnets trying to access our email servers and our HR system. That really brings home the importance of cybersecurity."

Richard Bean, CIO, VenuesWest

"Rather than moving to an operating platform or architecture and then needing to consider the cybersecurity approach, it is really embedded within the Microsoft cloud. So really, you get that protection and benefits as part of your overall learning platform. It sits very much meshed in and part of the ICT architecture which, in my view, is the best place for it to be."

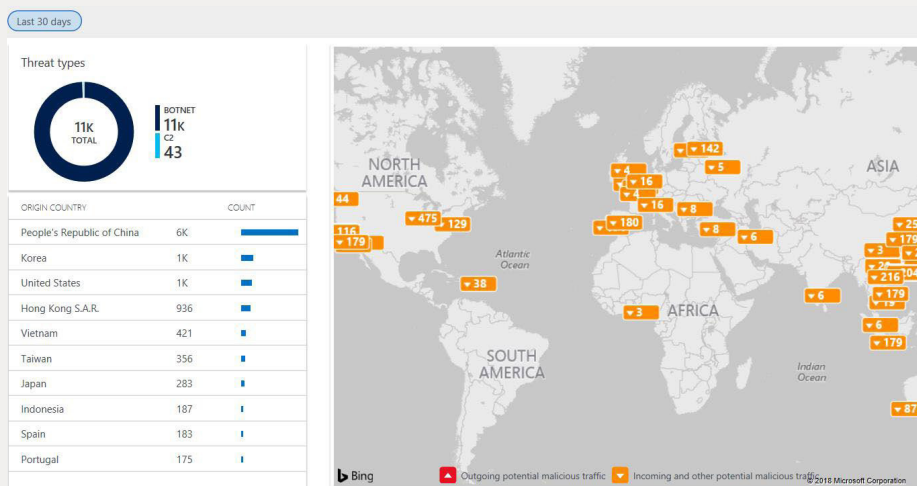**Steve Paul,** Director of Corporate Services, VenuesWest

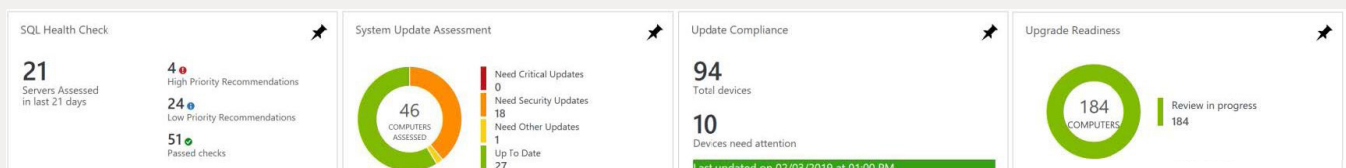*Figure 1. DNS Analytics from the Azure Portal (presented at the Oct. 2018 CIO Forum.)*

Figure 2. On-premises servers and PCs being monitored and controlled in Azure for VenuesWest.

What Insight delivered for VenuesWest:

Working with VenuesWest, Insight helped deploy what is described as Azure Foundations, allowing VenuesWest to digitally transform over the next couple of years, and stand in good technology stead for whatever the future holds.

Through a controlled and measured yet 'bigger-picture' mindset to transformation, Insight has delivered through an Agile and platform-first approach. This has resonated well VenuesWest IT, working in blended teams with Insight staff to spurred knowledge transfer.

Core components Insight delivered for the digital transformation:

Modern Management

- Assisted the move to Office 365, and Windows 10 roll out

Azure

- Design & implemented the architectural foundations for VenuesWest's Azure environment and configured Azure built-in capabilities such as back up, site recovery, automation to meet the organsational needs and strategy to gradually migrate workloads to the cloud.

Security

- Helped deploy identity management and multi-factor authentication for all users

Data Platform

- Currently engaged in helping VenuesWest deploy best-practice Azure data platform architecture to enable smooth migration of data workloads to Azure cloud.
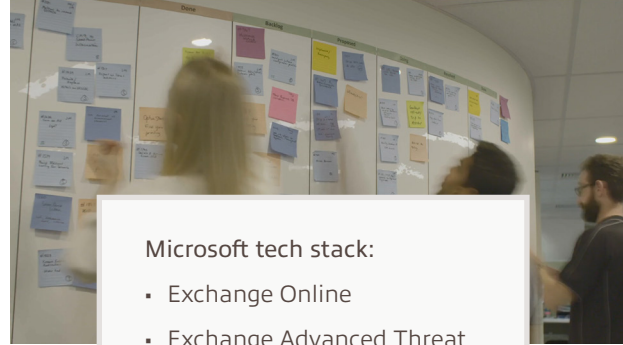
Microsoft tech stack:
- Exchange Online
- Exchange Advanced Threat Protection (ATP)
- Microsoft Intune
- Azure Active Directory
- Windows 10
- Windows Defender ATP
- ExpressRoute
- Azure Site Recovery
- Azure Backup
- Azure Monitor
- Various Azure IaaS & PaaS services
- Azure DevOps
- Azure ATP
- Microsoft Cloud App Security
- Azure AD Password Protection
- Advanced Threat Analytics

"The key learnings I share are: one, find a good partner like Insight, look at the big picture, look to simplify. Everything nowadays is a platform play. Whether you're looking at Azure as an overarching platform, Office 365 as a productivity platform or Microsoft 365 in that whole and entire stack – it's all a platform play. Instead of looking at multiple, single point solutions, look for platforms, like Azure that can really enable your business."

Richard Bean, CIO, VenuesWest

What's next for VenuesWest?

The cloud-first approach ensures VenuesWest is poised to deploy new technologies and innovations as they emerge. For example, the team has an eye on AI and chatbots for their potential application in the future, and the three-year transformation roadmap outlines plans for the use of IoT solutions to collect richer data about the 13 different venues and equipment that can be used to drive efficiencies and savings based on traffic volumes, energy consumption, wear and tear, and utilisation.