MYOB keeps ahead in the cloud.

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MYOB has been helping New Zealand and Australian businesses to succeed for more than 25 years. It is a leading provider of business management software, offering products ranging from basic cloud accounting and bankfeed products for the SME market, through to cloud-based Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), payroll and HR solutions for bigger businesses with more complex needs. This means it can scale-up with a business as it grows from start-up to a large enterprise.

MYOB offers Human Resource Management (HRM) solutions for larger enterprises called MYOB PayGlobal. This is a fully integrated payroll and HRM software solution that enables customers to make informed workforce decisions based on the best quality payroll and HR data. The solution is also offered as a fully managed hosted solution called MYOB PayGlobal Online, giving MYOB's customers fast and secure access to MYOB PayGlobal through the cloud.

Previously, MYOB PayGlobal was hosted in a traditional data centre in Auckland, with a disaster recovery (DR) site in Christchurch. The leased hardware that ran the DR solution offered limited scope for delivering a highly-available system and it was approaching the end of its useful life. As is common with hardware-based deployments, capacity planning and scalability was difficult.

MYOB engaged Fronde to design and build a secure, scalable, highly-available platform for MYOB PayGlobal running on the Amazon Web Services (AWS) platform.

The Challenge

MYOB needed to ensure that MYOB PayGlobal Online would be reliably available at all times, or risk alienating its customer base.

MYOB PayGlobal was located in an on-premise data centre in Auckland that was reaching the end of its three-year lease. Additionally, the Auckland location created a barrier for Australian customers who preferred a local solution.

MYOB Product Development Manager, Trevor Leybourne says, "MYOB was seeking a scalable, secure, and robust solution which allowed us to scale and grow with the business without purchasing and over-scoping infrastructure. We wanted to be able to grow as our customers grew and continue to provide the service they had come to expect from MYOB."

MYOB identified the need for:

- a highly-available system with no single point of failure
- secure access to cloud-hosted services based on named users and an IP address 'whitelist'
- a Microsoft Remote Desktop Services (RDS) service that performs at least as well as the current solution
- the ability to recover services into an alternative region
- high availability and scaling of the core MYOB PayGlobal Microsoft RDS functionality.

Solution

MYOB approached Fronde to build an AWS platform to provision a cloud-based Microsoft RDS solution to provide customers access to Internet-delivered MYOB application(s).

MYOB's key requirements were for a solution that was scalable, highly-available, secure, and would minimise upfront investments via a pay-as-you-go model. It also needed to have minimal risk of failure or breakdown, which would affect thousands of MYOB's customers and customer employees.

After scoping the project, Fronde agreed that AWS platform would satisfy the requirements, then developed a proof of concept to confirm the direction of the project.

Trevor Leybourne says, "MYOB saw the proof of concept as valuable and aligned with what we needed to achieve. Based on this, we were able to notify customers in advance of the planned change, and include a frequently-asked questions document that clearly outlined everything they needed to know. This type of preparation and change management held MYOB in good stead at the time of migration: there were no surprises."

After the POC, Fronde implemented the full solution and deployed PayGlobal, including infrastructure as a code (scripting) for DR.

MYOB clearly indicated that it did not require any kind of pilot-light or warm DR capability to another region, but wished to ensure that the system could be manually rebuilt in another region if necessary.

Fronde delivered CloudFormation templates that can be used with minor modification to recreate virtual private cloud (VPC) resources in another region and Amazon Machine Images (AMI) that can be stored in another region. To ensure that a system recovered to another region is up to date, updated AMIs and snapshot images of backup data (e.g. database backups, backups of Active Directory, application versions etc.) will need to be copied to Amazon Simple Storage Service (S3) in a remote region on a regular basis.

Results

The platform designed and built by Fronde to run MYOB PayGlobal on the AWS cloud has delivered on all of MYOB's key goals.

Cost management is far more controlled now with the ability to scale up at peak times and scale down when necessary, and only pay for usage. Previously, MYOB had to pay for more compute and storage capability than it really needed to accommodate peak times, without any capacity to scale up or down. This required a significant upfront investment, and meant MYOB paid for capacity it didn't require. This solution has eliminated those extra costs.

Backups were previously done via tape, which was a manual process that did not allow for direct information access, making disaster recovery complex. This process is now completely automated. AWS security is far more enhanced than the previous infrastructure, and MYOB is now utilising AWS security and best practice processes implemented by Fronde.

MYOB took an agile approach to delivery. The two-week cycle included one week for testing followed by a one-week pilot, which worked extremely well.

Trevor Leybourne says, "The Fronde team that worked with us on this project was great. They were knowledgeable about AWS and about our architecture goals, and they took the time to really get to know our business and processes well."

"The solution is sound and scalable, and will let us be flexible when bringing new clients on board. The data usage can now increase by big leaps when needed, as opposed to small steps.

"We have been innovating on the AWS platform for a number of years now and have been leveraging relationship with it to offer better products and services for our customers. This latest move helps us stay ahead in the cloud."

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