



Mission Critical Solutions

ISW assures continuity of access for Emergency Management information in Victoria with high-availability cloud services.



EMV strengthens Victoria's capacity to withstand, plan for, respond to and recover from emergencies

WHEN a major emergency breaks - be it a bush fire, a flood, or a terrorist attack - the ability to respond appropriately to the situation, contain the threat, and minimise the loss of life and property comes down to effective coordination across the many people and organisations involved in the response.

For the state of Victoria in Australia, Emergency Management Victoria is the umbrella agency responsible for coordinating any response. When formed in mid-2014, the new agency inherited responsibility for the EM-COP Library application, an online repository with instructions on what to do in an emergency, offering a single place for the critical documents required by emergency services agencies and personnel. While the online application receives its highest usage during an emergency event, it is also accessed frequently during non-emergency periods.

IMMEDIATE, RELIABLE ACCESS TO DATA IS CRITICAL IN EMERGENCIES

Established in July 2014, the new agency holds an expanded and mission-critical mandate for Victoria. It became essential that the EM-COP Library application be elevated to mission-critical status. Continuing to host the application from a shared environment in a single data centre was no longer tenable. More agencies and people would require access to the application during an emergency, and the risk of losing access to critical emergency information due to an inability to access the application called for immediate action.



A TRUSTED PARTNER



Emergency Management Victoria naturally turned to ISW to proactively assure continuity of access to the EM-COP Library application. As a multi-award winning Australian software and services company, ISW's focus is on delivering innovative and intelligent business technology solutions to clients worldwide. As a long-time partner to Emergency Management Victoria, ISW was already providing the current cloud hosting arrangement for the EM-COP Library application which is based on DocPublisher from SWING software.

The EM-COP Library application now needed to be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to more than 100 government agencies and local government authorities comprising 10,000's of personnel and volunteers across the state. In light of the expanded role required for the application across a growing set of users and agencies, ISW worked with Emergency Management Victoria to introduce high availability across two geographically dispersed data centres.

SOLUTION

ISW executed the new redundant design by provisioning a dedicated server in its data centre, and migrating the application off the previously shared environment. Once the application was migrated, ISW provisioned a second dedicated server in an IBM SoftLayer data centre, and created a copy of the EM-COP Library application. Synchronisation between the two copies of the application is achieved by taking advantage of native features in the underlying database used by the application.

Full testing was undertaken by the technical specialists at ISW, along with the creation of documentation for the required procedures. The final step in introducing the requisite level of redundancy was to provision automatic failover between the two data centres using DNS scripting. As currently configured, the application is hosted redundantly across both data centres, each of which is located in a different Australian state. All changes to critical documents are automatically replicated in near-real-time to the second copy of the application, and should one of the data centres go offline or the application become unresponsive for any reason, the failover functionality automatically redirects both current and new requests to the other data centre.

In line with its long-term commitment to clients, ISW provides continuous monitoring and administration of the environment and application across both data centres. This includes services such as proactive health monitoring, alerts of any outages, monthly performance reporting, and proactive technical management.



RESULTS

The change to a high availability cloud service has been welcomed by Emergency Management Victoria. John Simmons, Operational Information Systems Manager says: *"Emergency Management Victoria relies on High Availability Cloud42 services from ISW to host a number of vital applications used by Victorian emergency services agencies before, during and after emergencies such as bush fire or flood. The skills and experience of ISW combined with the high reliability of the enterprise-grade IBM SoftLayer Cloud infrastructure delivers a solution that Emergency Management Victoria has full confidence in."*

Usage of the EM-COP Library application is extensive and growing. For the quarter ending 31 December 2016, the EM-COP Library application had 23,113 unique visitors and served over 994,000 pages of information.

The high availability design is an essential foundation for Emergency Management Victoria, and while everyone hopes that emergency incidents will decrease in both severity and count, the foresight in providing the EM-COP Library application in a high availability configuration helps ensure that actual emergencies are contained as quickly and effectively as possible.

HOW WE CAN HELP YOU

ISW is ready to install confidence in similar organisations, with peace of mind that their solutions won't be affected by information emergencies. Let ISW leverage the very best high availability cloud services, in-depth technical knowledge, and market leading solutions for you. Please get in touch to schedule a discussion to learn more.

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