

CASE STUDY

Enabling IT Redundancy and Scalability for High-Availability Logistics Software

**Aljex Selects CyrusOne Data Centers and
Zimcom to Support Robust IT Infrastructure**

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Aljex Software, an award-winning transportation management software provider, was looking for a trusted partner to develop a comprehensive IT solution of its Web-based application. The partner needed to be able to deliver built-in redundancy, scalability, and a highly available solution. Aljex found a partner in Zimcom Internet Solutions, a channel partner of CyrusOne. Working together, they have developed a solution and were honored with a 2015 *Inbound Logistics Top 100 Logistics IT Provider* award.

The Company

Aljex Software is a leading provider of cloud-based transportation management software (TMS) that helps its customers manage large amounts of logistics data using a fully integrated software platform, garnering recognition from Inbound Logistics as a Top 100 Logistics IT Provider.

Customers rely on Aljex to provide a feature-rich software program with a stable and secure hardware platform and hosting solution. As a Software as a Service (SaaS) provider, Aljex must deliver the software to its clients and maintain cutting-edge hardware, backup solutions, security, and hosting services on the back end to ensure smooth delivery of the software to end users. It's often cost-prohibitive for companies to run this kind of software in-house and to provide an appropriate data backup and disaster recovery solution. "It is the norm for companies to rely on a single daily tape backup at best, and we provide three to four backups at no additional charge to all customers," says Joe Hirschman, president of Aljex Software.

The Challenge

Aljex was seeking a partner company to help it create a comprehensive IT solution for the reliable delivery and hosting of its Web-based application. In addition, it wanted to be in a data center environment with built-in redundancy and optional scalability to support expected future growth.

To expand its existing footprint into other regions for greater geographic diversity for delivery of its services to customers, Aljex needed to bolster its disaster recovery plans to include a more robust data protection and availability solution.



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The Solution

Aljex selected CyrusOne channel partner Zimcom Internet Solutions to provide a comprehensive cloud hosting solution. As a hosting and cloud solutions provider, Zimcom is well aware of the demands for secure computing environments with multiple layers of redundancy.

“Our clients rely on us to protect their data and make sure their hosted servers and applications are online and available 24/7,” says Jason Huebner, vice president and general manager of the Cincinnati, Ohio-based company. “That’s why it’s important for us to work with a data center provider that can not only meet our needs, but those of our customers as well.”

Zimcom chose CyrusOne as its preferred data center provider partly due to CyrusOne’s portfolio of over two dozen top-tier facilities across the globe. After initially taking space in CyrusOne’s downtown and North Cincinnati data centers, Zimcom has now expanded its presence to also include a CyrusOne facility in Carrollton (near Dallas, Texas). The expansion has enabled Zimcom to offer greater geographic diversity in its network, with built-in redundancy and interconnectivity between the facilities. “It’s been great working with a top-notch provider like CyrusOne to provide us with highly secure and stable data center facilities that we can rely on,” says Huebner.

Huebner adds, “We’re managing mission-critical data and Web applications for our clients to help keep them ahead of the curve. The highly secure data centers and 100 percent uptime SLA (service-level agreement) are absolutely critical for us. It gives us peace of mind knowing we’re backed by a top-notch facility.”

In turn, Zimcom worked with Aljex to design a comprehensive solution incorporating real-time data replication between its downtown Cincinnati, North Cincinnati, and Dallas data centers. Zimcom’s solution for Aljex also includes a robust backup and data

archiving schema. Continuous data protection enables Aljex to rapidly recover data at any point in time whenever needed.

Aljex’s Hirschman says, “We just launched a service that customers can elect to add that provides snap backups every five minutes. With our utilization of VMware servers and EMC storage technology, we can restore data or an entire server quickly in any of our three data centers. This is just one example of what our partnership with Zimcom and CyrusOne allows us to do.”

The partnership between Aljex and Zimcom has been successful for over four years now and continues to grow, with future plans already being discussed to expand into other CyrusOne data centers.

The ability to expand its footprint over time was also important to Aljex. “At Aljex we believe in ‘cloud computing with crowd improving’. We want to be able to quickly and easily add features that benefit the entire community of our current and future customers,” says Hirschman.

Aljex competes with enterprise solutions that require hardware, multiple licensing fees, and, at times, on-site staff. According to Hirschman, “When a prospective client compares our SaaS solution to an enterprise competitor, one Aljex advantage is the elimination of the need to employ one or two full-time people to manage and maintain expensive hardware. Our solution helps customers save tens or even hundreds of thousands of dollars in hardware and licensing fees as well as the costs associated with redundant Internet connections and sophisticated firewalls required when running software ‘in house’.”

Aljex has found the price of its software is often less than the maintenance costs of other competing products and also eliminates the upfront costs of buying enterprise software.

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Benefits

High Availability

One of the main goals for Aljex is to give customers maximum uptime and availability of services so customers can focus on running their operations and not worry about their IT. “Working with CyrusOne and Zimcom makes it easy for me to go to sleep at night knowing that my company’s data is safe and secure,” says Hirschman.

CyrusOne helps partners like Zimcom deliver mission-critical services to end users through its highly redundant and secure data center facilities with:

- High degree of resiliency with no single point of failure
- Carrier-neutral facilities
- Certifications and audits that can include SSAE16, TIA 942 Class 4, ISO 27001, HIPAA, PCI-DSS, FISMA
- 100% uptime service-level agreement (SLA)

Redundant Solutions

Aljex chose Zimcom in part because of its relationship with CyrusOne. CyrusOne’s extensive data center footprint provides architected solutions with built-in redundancy across multiple facilities in different geographic regions — an important feature for a company providing software solutions from coast to coast.

Aljex is able to take advantage of an N-2 network infrastructure configuration designed and implemented by Zimcom. This configuration and the replication technology used mean any single one of the three locations can support the entire workload of Aljex’s systems in the event of a disaster situation.

Scalability

CyrusOne offers flexible, scalable solutions for all its customers by matching the needs of each business as it grows and expands. Working with Zimcom enables Aljex to harness the power of this network and the resources that CyrusOne has put together. Without these resources, it would be more expensive and time-consuming for Aljex to handle on its own or through multiple vendors.

“Aljex had been utilizing multiple hosting providers prior to working with Zimcom,” says Huebner. “We helped them transition from physical hardware onto a completely 100 percent virtualized environment, with enterprise-class servers and storage arrays to provide them with the high-availability environment they needed.”

“Being able to consolidate from four vendors with separate data centers to one vendor and one data center provider has greatly streamlined our operations,” says Hirschman.

CyrusOne gives thorough assistance in scoping, engineering, and implementing customers’ solutions to ensure the proper size now as well as into the future.

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The Companies

Aljex Software

Aljex Software, based in Middlesex, N.J., is one of the country's leading providers of cloud-based transportation management software. Aljex serves freight brokers, motor carriers, intermodal operations, airfreight forwarders, container draymen, and third-party logistics providers.

In addition to providing operations and accounting functions, Aljex also offers its customers EDI services, GPS integrations, Web portals, and many other timesaving features. These offerings help Aljex customers gain a competitive edge against other transportation service providers.

Zimcom Internet Solutions

Zimcom was founded in 1999 and has grown to become one of the Midwest's premier hosting and cloud solutions providers. Based out of Cincinnati, Zimcom provides leading-edge cloud services to clients who need a provider they can trust to manage their hosted infrastructure and data assets. Zimcom specializes in providing highly scalable and redundant solutions for its clients while focusing on data protection and availability. As a trusted CyrusOne partner, Zimcom currently has network infrastructure operations within a number of CyrusOne's North America facilities.

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About CyrusOne

CyrusOne (NASDAQ: CONE) specializes in highly reliable enterprise-class, carrier-neutral data center properties. The company provides mission-critical data center facilities that protect and ensure the continued operation of IT infrastructure for hundreds of customers, including many of the Fortune 1000.

CyrusOne's data center offerings provide the flexibility, reliability and security that enterprise customers require, which are delivered through a tailored, customer service-focused platform designed to foster long-term relationships. CyrusOne's National Internet Exchange (IX) provides robust connectivity options that help drive revenue, reduce expenses and improve service quality for the enterprise. CyrusOne is committed to full transparency in communication, management and service delivery throughout its worldwide footprint of enterprise data centers.

Learn more at CyrusOne.com.

About the Author

Fred Holloway, vice president of the partner ecosystem at CyrusOne, is responsible for the recruitment, growth, and management of CyrusOne's partners. He has enjoyed over 25 years of experience managing global sales teams in the enterprise and has brought the same rigor to CyrusOne's channel organization. With over 120 partners providing services across various IT disciplines, CyrusOne has developed one of the most robust groups of complementary IT offerings available in the data center industry via its partner ecosystem. Prior to joining CyrusOne, Holloway managed the energy segment for Hewlett-Packard's global accounts organization.

