

# Case Study – MMO Guildsites

## Who they are

Founded in 2006, MMO Guildsites is a rapidly growing web site design and hosting company that helps massive multiplayer online role playing game (MMORPG) guilds to create and administer feature-rich sites for its membership. The company began after its founders designed a site for their own guild and received overwhelming interest from its members and the greater MMORPG community.

MMO Guildsites differentiates itself from a small but growing number of competitors by only offering subscription-based packages and with its premium site-building tools and features, including:

- An easy-to-use site design tool with an advanced AJAX interface
- A visual theming tool with a library of 80 professionally designed themes
- Innovative add-ins that integrate game activity into the guild sites
- By streamlining site development and administration, MMO Guildsites presents guilds with a unique opportunity to maintain a robust site without sacrificing time that they would rather spend gaming.

This approach, as well as a reputation for providing exemplary customer responsiveness, has helped MMO Guildsites experience regular, consistent growth with very minimal customer turnover, attracting customers who tend to be more highly dedicated to their site and game. The company currently hosts more than 700 sites for guilds based around the world, representing major game titles including World of Warcraft, Final Fantasy, Lord of the Rings Online, and EverQuest.

As its customer base and the MMORPG industry continues growing (industry-wide game subscriptions increased by more than 1-million in the last half of 2008 alone<sup>1</sup>), MMO Guildsites' keeps constant vigil of emerging web technologies and maintains active plans for scaling its infrastructure.

<sup>1</sup> Woodcock, Bruce Sterling. "Total MMOG Subscriptions," MMOGCHART.COM. 2 April 2008.

## MMO Guildsites — at a glance

### Company

MMO Guildsites

### Location

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

### URL

www.mmoguildsites.com

### Industry

Web Design & Hosting; Online Gaming

### Profile

A web hosting company that provides unique, easy to use tools, and advanced features for massive multiplayer online role-playing game guilds to create and maintain their own community sites.

### Challenge

As a rapidly growing startup, MMO Guildsites required a scalable and high-performance hosting solution with the highest level of control and expert support.

### Solution

Moved to SoftLayer's quad processor multi-core server solution and began leveraging full administrative access through out-of-band management.

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## Challenge

In three short years, MMO Guildsites grew from a small, personal project into a business that serves hundreds of customers and several-hundred guild sites. As its customer base grew, so did the size and complexity of its technology needs. The company tried various hosting service partners, leading to a number of negative experiences and, in one instance, a significant loss of trust when one provider prematurely decommissioned a server during a system-to-system migration.

MMO Guildsites needed a hosting service that could provide the level of performance and stability necessary to accommodate its growing technology needs and continue providing the superior experience that its customers' value. It wanted a provider that had the services, flexibility, and expertise that would help leverage new web frameworks with room to implement future innovations.

## Solution

MMO Guildsites actively researched new hosting services, focusing on providers that offered only dedicated servers; they were confident such a company would offer higher reliability and more tightly focused support. After consistent, compelling referrals from within the Ruby on Rails community, MMO Guildsites selected SoftLayer, impressed by its range of server and customization options, including the ability to configure network port speeds.

MMO Guildsites selected the quad processor multi-core server platform in SoftLayer's Dallas data center. They use SoftLayer's secure, out-of-band management through VPN for full control of their environment, enabled by SoftLayer's industry-leading network topology. SoftLayer's wide-range of 32- and 64-bit operating systems allows MMO Guildsites to enjoy running the same operating system on their hosted system as they have on their local machines, streamlining system administration. Additionally, SoftLayer's proprietary customer portal lets the company easily track its customers' traffic and usage.

To meet future business needs, MMO Guildsites plans to take advantage of SoftLayer's diverse server offering and advanced API to scale their environment and optimize application performance. MMO Guildsites is also considering locating additional servers in SoftLayer's Seattle and Washington D.C. data centers to maximize server-traffic proximity.

## About SoftLayer

Headquartered in Plano, Texas, SoftLayer delivers next generation webhosting and on-demand datacenter services located in Dallas TX and Seattle WA. Utilizing proprietary software, coupled with the industry's first network-within-a-network topology, the company delivers unprecedented power and control to securely manage IT environments while providing unparalleled scalability.