

HOSTED TECHNOLOGIES:

- Windows
- SQL Server
- Hyper-V
- Citrix

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN HARCOURT: A CUSTOM HOSTING CASE STUDY

Connectria - delivering hosting services how you need it, when you need it.

Since 1832, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH) is one of the world's longstanding publishing houses, providing pre-K-12 education and professional development materials. With a large and diverse IT operations, HMH decided to consolidate and streamline its internal systems, including the use of managed hosting. They chose Connectria to host and manage its critical Integrated Publishing System and continue to explore an expanded relationship with Connectria. [Learn why.](#)





About Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH) is a global learning company with the mission of changing people's lives by fostering passionate, curious learners. Among the world's largest providers of pre-K-12 education solutions and one of its longest-established publishing houses, HMH combines cutting-edge research, editorial excellence and technological innovation to improve teaching and learning environments, as well as solving complex literacy and education challenges. Originally a traditional book manufacturer founded in 1832, HMH has evolved in the current digital world and now focuses upon creating hybrid education products and solutions that incorporate interactive technologies for both student and teacher achievement. Today, HMH's interactive, results-driven education solutions are utilized by over 50 million students across 150 countries, and its renowned and awarded novels, non-fiction, children's books and reference works are enjoyed by readers throughout the world.

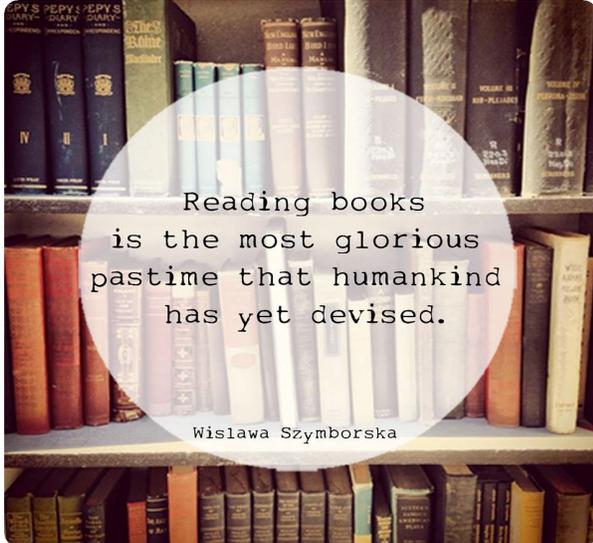


HMH Challenges

As a company with over 4,000 employees, HMH manages a large and diverse IT infrastructure. Some of these systems were home-grown while others were inherited through Houghton's acquisition of Harcourt Education in 2007, as well as subsequent acquisitions. In order to ensure a more efficient IT operations capable of achieving company goals, HMH decided to consolidate and streamline its platforms and vendors. According to Michael Kelley, HMH Vice President, Business Relationship Management & Governance, "We've been spending the last couple of years trying to get a much more straightforward, consolidated and synchronized approach to systems. We want to make sure we avoid having multiple suppliers of the same service or application trying to solve the same problem."

One of the key systems that HMH had to address was its Integrated Publishing System (IPS). IPS is a collaboration system that supports the HMH production team, including editors and

designers, in the creation of print and digital product. It's a complicated, mission-critical system for sharing materials and content under development subject to firm deadlines. For instance, HMH published content for statewide adoption, including many of the largest U.S. states with the greatest number of students, imposes immovable deadlines for delivery. It was crucial for HMH to ensure this system was "bulletproof," always available, responsive and secure.



At the time, HMH had a charter to limit use of internal resources. This was reinforced by a new CEO and CIO. According to Kelley, "the new CEO has brought a focus. During a period in our industry, the magic word among some CEO's was outsourcing. I think the concern was you don't outsource things where you have particular expertise that really give you a differentiator in the market. More recently there's been a general trend towards managed hosting. The era of owning your own data centers was something more prevalent 10 years ago than it is now. I'd say we're definitely in that movement as well...putting the onus on the hosting provider to keep the equipment

optimized, refreshed and running."

HMH maintained that it's more cost-effective and efficient to outsource infrastructure and logistics required rather than manage it internally, particularly if they could find a provider to assume this burden and do it well. "We've had the experience where you can interact with providers that require a lot babysitting and hand holding and suddenly something that you think you've purchased your way out of is your problem as well, so it's kind of a double loss," stated Michael Kelley.

With such a mission-critical system as IPS, HMH wanted to ensure they would choose the right hosting provider for managing, administering and optimizing the system. With the right partner, HMH believed they could outsource IPS and relieve themselves of its ongoing management and fine tuning.

Choosing Connectria

HMH is no stranger to hosting. With several incumbents and other alternative vendors available for consideration, HMH wanted a managed hosting partner they could count upon. They believed if they were to outsource IPS, the hosting provider would need the requisite expertise along with a commitment to HMH. The IPS system is a combination of off-the-shelf software

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configured with a database and plug-ins which allow developers to easily collaborate with one another to create product. It's a mixture of standardized settings and very customized components that often requires fine-tuning to optimize. HMM did not want to be in a position where they would have to narrate to the hosting provider how they'd have to optimize their own equipment. After evaluating several vendors, HMM chose Connectria.



“Connectria was sincerely focused upon getting HMM what we needed first,” noted Kelley. “With some other vendors, the first discussion is how much money they’re making

off the solution. Our experience with Connectria is that they concentrate on solving our problems and that pricing issues get settled as a matter of course. For example, if we have an urgent need, particularly if it were related to one of those states with hard and fast deadlines for submissions, Connectria acted as though they were really part of our business, solving our problems; then resolving relationship needs in terms of contract after the fact in some cases. I don’t think you can ask more than that. They really put themselves in our seat and figured out what we needed to get to where we wanted to go.”

Under Connectria’s managed hosting services, IPS continues to flourish. According to HMM, with very minimal interaction from them, IPS has enjoyed almost 100% uptime and they haven’t had any major issues. This incident free experience was exactly what their content developers were hoping for. Kelley further noted, “We’ve had experiences with other companies that position themselves as Managed Hosting providers but were really far less than that.

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Kelley went on to say, "I'm a big fan of Connectria. They've really made it effortless to host and manage a complex environment. As we look toward expansion into cloud services, we have no reservations that Connectria has the skills and "chops" for it. We've really benefited from our relationship with Connectria. It's been a great experience."

ABOUT CONNECTRIA

Connectria provides award-winning cloud computing, managed hosting and custom managed hosting solutions for more than 1,000 customers in over 30 countries worldwide. Recognized as the #1 Cloud in North America, we are experts in complex multi-vendor solutions, and we support the broadest range of technologies, managed services and security in the industry.

At the core of Connectria is our No Jerks Allowed® company philosophy. As The Jerk Free Company®, we've established a unique culture where every individual goes "the extra mile" to take care of our customers. Being The Jerk Free Company® extends beyond our people too. We make it easy to do business with us through flexible terms, scalable solutions and straight-forward pricing to serve the hosting needs of large and small organizations alike.



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www.connectria.com/services/custom_managed_hosting_plan.php

To learn more about Connectria's #1 Cloud Ranking, please visit us at:
www.connectria.com/about_us/news/050813.php

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