

CASE STUDY

Ameren: A Custom Hosting Case Study



Challenge

Ameren wanted to free up IT staff to allow them to focus more on business processes.

Selection Criteria

- Experience supporting a customer-facing environment
- An understanding of the energy industry
- The ability to aggregate resources

Result

Connectria helped Ameren design and execute a comprehensive migration plan, which was completed ahead of schedule. Today, Connectria manages a number of servers which house Ameren's mission- and business-critical applications such as the customer portal, the outage analysis systems, and a number of internal systems such as procurement and human resources.

Ameren provides energy to more than 2.4 million electric and almost 1 million gas customers in Illinois and Missouri. When Ameren decided to outsource the hosting of its customer-facing applications, they chose Connectria not once, but twice. Learn more about why Ameren moved to a hosted model and how Connectria became an integral part of Ameren's operations.

The Challenge

Ameren turned to hosting in an effort to enable their IT staff to better focus on business processes and needs. Ameren wanted to ensure their IT staff was knowledgeable of key business processes in the delivery of energy. Outsourcing the building and management of servers would free up resources to help achieve this objective.

The Ameren and Connectria relationship dates back to 2002, when Connectria began providing high availability hosting services for Ameren's corporate web infrastructure. After several years of service, Ameren chose to leave the partnership to pursue strategic contracts consolidation. As a result of the consolidation effort, Ameren began to utilize the hosting services of a larger managed hosting provider, and quickly began to see differences in the levels of service received from the new vendor compared to Connectria.

CASE STUDY

Ameren's IT staff felt that its new managed hosting provider was lacking a level of flexibility in allowing timely modification and customization to infrastructures. There was an overall lack of proactive management in the handling of hosted systems compared to what Ameren's IT staff was used to receiving from Connectria. Ameren knew that expanding its own internal IT organization to support the technologies was not an option, but still felt that a 3rd party vendor was better suited for the position.

The Solution

Ameren decided to launch another search based on more specific criteria. Ameren wanted a vendor who displayed an expert core competency around supporting a customer-facing environment. Ameren needed a vendor who possessed the ability to provision, manage, and monitor systems. Not only did the hosting provider need to manage and monitor, but also alert Ameren in advance of any foreseen issues. Having flexibility in understanding Ameren's environment, and the ability to aggregate resources were also on the list of requirements in switching vendors.

In the time frame that Ameren was away from Connectria, technology evolved and advanced. However, one thing remained the same; Connectria stayed ahead of the curve and adopted many of the new technologies in which Ameren was interested in. Ameren valued the adept knowledge that Connectria possessed, particularly around VMware, which was something many potential vendors were lacking. Having partnered with Connectria in the past, Ameren knows the superior level of service Connectria is capable of providing and selected Connectria to become Ameren's custom hosting provider of choice. Ameren had a tight timeline to vacate from their old hosting provider and migrate over, but Connectria assisted with the transition. Connectria helped Ameren with the design and delivery of the migration project plan, and were able to successfully transition earlier than expected.



"Connectria meets every detail in our SLA and more.

They understand how to deliver the best service, and provide best practices ideas to make us better as a company.

They know when bad weather is coming and what that means to our customers. They take a proactive interest in our business, which is key to our success."

John Hughes,

Managing Supervisor of Infrastructure

Hosted Technologies:

- Custom Private Cloud
- VMware
- Linux

CASE STUDY

The Results

Today, Connectria supports a variety of Ameren's applications from their Tier 1 data centers, including internal and external facing systems. Connectria monitors the eCustomer portal, which enables Ameren customers to conduct business online related to their accounts, such as online bill pay and various other types of support. The outage map is also housed and managed at Connectria, and news media outlets use this site to announce where power outages are occurring during inclement weather in Illinois and Missouri areas. Connectria also supports Ameren's outage analysis system which is used internally to determine where customer outages are happening and where to dispatch Ameren crews to fix problems. Other internal systems related to B2B activities, such as procurement and human resources websites are also monitored by Connectria. According to John Hughes, Managing Supervisor of Infrastructure, "Connectria has exceeded our expectations to provide excellent uptime and availability. They have designed better solutions than we originally asked for, and are willing to customize to meet our needs. Connectria has a culture of getting things done and doing it right. We definitely see a potential to grow our business with them into the future."

"Since Connectria is the data center for our customer facing applications, availability and uptime are critical. It's one of our key performance indicators we monitor each month, and I can say that since we moved to Connectria, availability has been very good... exceeding expectations and just keeps getting better."

John Hughes,
Managing Supervisor of Infrastructure



About Ameren

Ameren Corporation is a Fortune 500 company with assets of \$23 billion. With more than 9,200 employees, Ameren serves 2.4 million electric customers and more than 900,000 natural gas customers across 64,000 square miles in Illinois and Missouri. In order to adequately serve the needs of its large customer base, Ameren has to ensure that they have the proper infrastructure in place for doing so. Ameren's maintenance and 100 percent uptime of its internal corporate systems is crucial to their business. These systems help Ameren know when and where to dispatch crews when electrical or natural gas issues arise. The uptime of customer facing systems is just as important in allowing Ameren to quickly communicate with the media on where the outages are located.

For more information visit
ameren.com

About Connectria

From Fortune 100 enterprises to medium and small businesses, Connectria provides managed cloud, managed services, and compliant cloud security solutions to more than 1,000 global customers. Working as an extension of each customer's IT team, we deliver technology-agnostic solutions consistently, with depth and breadth of engineering expertise, scalable solutions, and speed to market. Our "No Jerks Allowed" philosophy includes flexible terms, straight-forward pricing, and custom solutions. With a culture based on integrity and an unwavering employee commitment to treating every customer with a relentless focus on satisfaction, it's easy to do business with Connectria.



Connect with us today

Talk to one of our IT advisors by calling **800.781.7820** or reaching out to us by email: sales@connectria.com.

