

Onclusive Rapidly Scales Marketing Analytics with Xi Beam by Nutanix

Leading Data Science Company Helps Clients Deliver Targeted, Impactful Content

BUSINESS BENEFITS

Onclusive is a data science company that brings new levels of insights to marketing and communications. The company reveals which strategies drive actual brand engagement so that the most valuable content can be delivered to its clients' target audience, at scale. To support many marketing campaigns around the world, Onclusive consumes many compute instances in the cloud—with a modest IT staff to scale and manage them. The company turned to Xi Beam for the visibility and analytics it needed to understand and control the way it consumes cloud. The result is better planning, up to 40 percent cost savings on reserved instance spending, and more empowered IT engineers.



“Beam enables our small engineering team to manage thousands of cloud instances that are very dynamic, scaling up and down all the time, without having to dedicate people to tracking those resources and spend.”

– Patrick Liang, Chief Architect, Onclusive

CHALLENGES

To deliver the insights its clients need to make better marketing decisions, Onclusive is constantly ingesting and analyzing online content such as news articles, blog posts, product reviews, and other materials. The amount of resources consumed by workloads changes quickly, and Onclusive must quickly

INDUSTRY

Marketing and Communications

BENEFITS

- Ability to track spend by cloud services back to cost centers for better budgeting decisions.
- Optimal compute resource purchases using Reserved Instances saves 30 to 40 percent in RI costs.
- One-click ability to fix resource misconfigurations helps improve cloud security posture.

SOLUTION

Xi Beam by Nutanix

scale its AWS cloud resources to accommodate new waves of content at different times. “We run our infrastructure in the cloud, including user-facing web applications, background processing, databases and web crawler,” said Liang.

With just 20 engineers handling billions of jobs, Onclusive relies heavily on automation policies. But with so much happening at such a fast pace, it’s easy for details to get lost in the shuffle. “We found that the native AWS tools were not effective at giving us the visibility and awareness we needed,” said Liang. “For example, it was hard to tell if we had an appropriate number of reservations for our compute instances, if we were managing our Spot Instance bidding strategies effectively, or we had security issues that we might be unaware of.” Onclusive needed a solution that would give its IT team real-time insight into its cloud consumption patterns.

SOLUTION

Onclusive evaluated several solutions, but chose Beam, which provided superior ease of use and ease of integration. With Beam, Liang and his engineers gain the ability to look more deeply into their cloud consumption patterns and in an intuitive way. “We found that it enabled us to quickly see top level metrics, such as projected cost per month, far more accurately than AWS provided tools did,” he said. “Beam also gives us the ability to drill down into granular recommendations on a per-reservation or per-instance level. Given our lean engineering team, having something like Beam was extremely helpful to us to gain a bird’s-eye view of how our infrastructure was performing overall.”

Security is always top of mind for Onclusive, and Beam helps the organization support continuous security posture management using built-in, automated security audits that help them comply with cloud security best practices. “We use Beam to track whether security groups are configured incorrectly, identify different IAM roles that are too open, or buckets that are not set up to have the right encryption or retention,” says Liang. “There are a lot of different issues that Beam’s security capabilities let us stay on top of.”

RESULTS

Beam’s powerful capabilities enable Onclusive engineers to see and manage their cloud infrastructure better, so they spend less time with manual tasks, and gain a better understanding of how cloud services are used. “We have several cloud services that are hard to track back to cost centers, and Beam allows us to do that much more effectively,” said Liang. “For example, it was difficult to tag specific reserved instance spending using the AWS native tool. You would need to export cost reports to Excel or other tools. Beam lets us constantly process them and apply the tagging that we have already done in the platform, or using its chargeback functionality, to get a consistent, updated view of all our spend. If we spot an anomaly, we can take a closer look and see where an increase occurred in a specific service—what the average spend was before that. It’s very easy for us to split and delve into the data we need.”

The Reserved Instance (RI) planner feature included in Beam also provides huge cost savings for compute instances. It lets Onclusive evaluate how it is using RIs, continuously purchase and renew reservations in small batches that reflect current infrastructure needs, and delivers intelligent recommendations for optimizing costs. “Beam has been great for helping us see if there are RIs that are expiring, not being used, or not applying properly,” said Liang. “It’s also great for planning how we want to structure our RI purchases for the future. If we weren’t using Reserved Instances at all, our cost would be approximately double or triple what it is. If we were using it in a less optimized way than Beam allows us to, maybe 30-40 percent more.”

NEXT STEPS

Onclusive is learning more and more about the potential in Beam and looking for new ways to apply it. The IT team is especially excited about using Beam for managing AWS Spot Instances. “We have been using Spot Instances for a long time, but that has required a lot of tooling that we have had to develop in house to work with them,” said Liang. “Handling additional management tasks on the Xi Beam solution would be super helpful for us.”



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