



Performance SLAs in the cloud are now a reality.

SolidFire storage solutions allow Brinkster to build guaranteed performance SLAs that address every customer's application needs.

Brinkster at a glance

Brinkster is a managed hosting service provider specializing in IT Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS). The company provides industry-leading expertise and world-class hosting solutions to over 50,000 customers in more than 175 countries. Since 1999, Brinkster has developed long-lasting customer relationships through its commitment to Expert Support.

Brinkster differentiates its services through a one-on-one customer-hosting implementation approach for each customer. Like many other providers, Brinkster has suffered the negative effects of noisy neighbors within its shared computing platforms and sought a technology that would enable them to guarantee predictable performance to every application in their cloud. They also wanted a solution that would easily integrate with OpenStack and their current management platform. Brinkster was also timed for a technology refresh and takes pride in offering the latest technology to help address their customers' individual application needs.

Solution portfolio

Brinkster offers custom-designed IaaS for its customers using the latest technologies available today.

Brinkster's unique approach to customizing every customer's cloud environment ensures that each individual application receives its own level of guaranteed performance.

Brinkster's mission is two-fold. The first goal is to deliver an exceptional managed hosting experience to mid-enterprise customers. Brinkster's second goal is to deliver a seamless VAR/white-label solution that allows partners and VARs to increase the level of services that they can offer to their customers.

This depth of service allows Brinkster to leverage their core support strength and maximize the cloud hosting experience for both customers and partners alike.



"Brinkster's one-on-one approach to understanding every customer's unique architecture allows our customers' applications to experience a predictable performance in the cloud."

- Nathaniel Kemberling, CTO, Brinkster

Brinkster's technology challenge

Over the years, Brinkster has evolved from being a commodity, shared web-hosting provider to a recognized name in the enterprise managed cloud services space.

Having spent time as a shared web-hoster, Brinkster staffers understand how a noisy neighbor can negatively affect everyone on a legacy storage system. As a result, they have become experts in the art of isolating and minimizing the effects of noisy neighbors. In the past, managers leveraged many of the common tools to boost poor performance - from short-stroking drives to adding extra disks to migrating customers to dedicated systems. Each of these manual techniques resulted in small improvements, but none were able to remove performance variability entirely.

Brinkster executives have also broadened their addressable market by supporting more enterprise workloads. The complexity and demands of applications like NoSQL and Mongo meant that virtually every application had different performance requirements. They wanted a single storage architecture that would support all application types and deliver the exact resources required. Integrating a single platform from which they can service a broad range of application performance levels allowed them to simplify storage management and reduce the complexity of their solution delivery.

In addition to overcoming the noisy neighbor and single-platform challenges, executives also wanted to attract a broader set of business-critical applications by offering firm, performance-based SLAs. In the past, the only way to offer marginally predictable performance was to dedicate expensive infrastructure to a specific application that required extensive resources to support.

“As the cloud becomes the home for more true Tier-1 applications, having solutions like SolidFire on the back-end is essential. It’s the only way we will guarantee the enterprise-class level of service that our customers expect from a top cloud services provider.”

– Nathaniel Kemberling, CTO, Brinkster

Brinkster specialists realized that their legacy storage architecture was not capable of meeting their customers' performance needs cost-effectively. To solve their storage challenges and help lay the groundwork for the future of their cloud offering, managers realized that they needed to find a new storage vendor and focused their search on all-SSD based systems. The primary driver for this decision was the desire to better support IOPS-heavy applications. Additional drivers included compatibility with OpenStack and the company's current management framework, along with the ability to provision and deliver consistent performance-based SLAs.

In the end, the most difficult challenge was to find a system that could combine fine-grain performance management with SLA performance guarantees – and do so profitably.

“With SolidFire, Tier-1 applications can now be offered cost-effectively in a cloud environment.”

– Nathaniel Kemberling, CTO, Brinkster

“We want to offer a standard level of performance that every customer can get and can always expect.”

– Nathaniel Kemberling, CTO, Brinkster

Fueled by SolidFire™

- **No more noisy neighbors.** Over the years, like most hosting companies using legacy storage, Brinkster has struggled to manage the effects of the noisy neighbor. By implementing a SolidFire system that incorporates fine-grain Quality of Service control, managers have eliminated the effects of noisy neighbors. Moreover, they can now offer performance guarantees around their cloud storage offering.
- **Deliver a predictable cloud hosting experience.** By removing the effects of noisy neighbors and by solving the IOPS (performance) bottlenecks inherent in legacy storage systems, the company now delivers a predictable cloud hosting experience. This gives enterprise customers the confidence to migrate their critical applications onto Brinkster’s public cloud platform.
- **Isolation of capacity and IOPS.** SolidFire’s ability to separately provision IOPS and performance allows managers to enhance their consultative, one-on-one approach to the configuration of each customer’s needs. By specifying both storage capacity and IOPS individually, Brinkster’s customers receive a highly tuned platform, perfectly adapted to their application versus a generic, one-size-fits-all virtual platform.
- **Extended service offerings.** SolidFire’s ability to offer guaranteed IOPS and fine-grain QoS control has allowed Brinkster to offer a broader set of vertical solutions that could not easily be delivered in the past. So Brinkster can now offer industry-specific hosting solutions that have specific IOPS needs such as VDI and performance SLAs to deliver a guaranteed end-user experience.
- **Bring on the SLAs.** The company has always offered SLAs specifying uptime, power, and network parameters. But managers never felt confident offering SLAs for QoS or guaranteed IOPS. The SolidFire storage system has overcome this barrier, giving executives the confidence to field a completely tunable, performance-based SLA that aligns with their current strategy.
- **No more legacy SAN.** Brinkster has experience with many legacy SAN systems. Yet each one is subject to the same challenges: disk sprawl, the hassle of migrating customers between storage platforms, or reduced performance due to “bolt-on” features like compression or deduplication. The SolidFire system is built from the ground up to incorporate QoS and has made storage management easy. Granular provisioning and API-based management makes migration headaches a thing of the past and helps managers to not only keep operational costs low, but also pass on savings to customers.
- **Improved customer retention.** Brinkster executives have reduced customer churn by eliminating unpredictable storage performance and ensuring high-availability services. Moreover, the SolidFire system’s modular design, consistent performance, Helix™ data protection, and dramatically faster volume rebuild times helped Brinkster build out the reliable storage architecture required to support their future cloud business.
- **Price and performance.** Brinkster now has a predictable platform that eliminates storage I/O bottlenecks and eliminates the need for overprovisioning disks to deliver the required IOPS. Combined with the built-in SolidFire storage efficiency technologies (deduplication, compression and thin provisioning), Brinkster can now offer high-performance, SSD-based storage solutions for the same price as legacy spinning-disk offerings. The value proposition of an SSD-based offering, at the same cost as legacy storage, is a key differentiator that will drive enterprise customers to migrate their high-performance applications to the Brinkster cloud.

- **Complete API integration.** SolidFire's complete API-based approach to maximizing cloud integration and control was a critical component that allowed Brinkster to easily integrate the SolidFire solution into their current cloud management platform. The REST-based API made integration existing systems easy. And it allowed Brinkster marketers to quickly productize performance capabilities to bring new solutions to market faster, profitably.
- **Scale-out, not scale-up.** Based on past experience with different legacy SAN vendors, executives realized that it was cost-prohibitive to scale-up their legacy infrastructure. By adopting the SolidFire storage platform, they overcame this challenge. Their modular design enables scaling in 1U increments to correspond with customer demand.

"95% of applications will run on cloud infrastructure in the next 10 years, and SolidFire gives us a way to cost-effectively deliver the control and performance essential to deliver a better and more consistent experience to our customers."

– Nathaniel Kemberling, CTO, Brinkster

Discover more of what SolidFire can fuel for you.

Contact us today and advance the way your customers use the cloud.



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