

# CASE STUDY

” Office 365 is a great value for businesses. There’s no upfront investment, yet you get full-functionality applications and 24/7 support at a very fair price. “

Michael Zillmer, Founder and Chief Operating Officer, InnoGames





## CASE STUDY

### ONLINE GAMING OPERATOR SCORES BIG WITH CLOUD SOLUTION

Hamburg-based InnoGames is among the top three online gaming operators in Germany, with more than 100 million registered users worldwide. The company was born out of a hobby project by brothers Eike and Hendrik Klindworth and Michael Zillmer, who created the game "Tribal Wars" in 2003.

The trio formed InnoGames in 2007, and success came quickly as the company grew to 230 employees today.

Amid rapid growth, InnoGames wanted to refocus its limited IT staff from time-intensive troubleshooting issues with its hosted email provider to high-value business intelligence projects. InnoGames discovered that Microsoft Office 365 would not only solve many of its issues, but it would also benefit the company in unexpected ways.

[www.innogames.de](http://www.innogames.de)

### SITUATION

Online gaming generates a tremendous amount of data, and making it available to help make games more engaging and uncover new ways to monetize them is a top priority for InnoGames.

However, the company's internal IT team was bogged down supporting its growth.

With plans to grow its Hamburg staff to 280 by the end of 2013, InnoGames Chief of IT Christopher Lindemann knew it was crucial that the company refocus its small IT staff on supporting critical business projects like Business Intelligence, rather than on administrative tasks and troubleshooting email issues. InnoGames had also expanded beyond Germany, with two remote offices in South Korea and Sao Paulo, Brazil. With more than 170 community managers and more than 1,600 volunteers, the gaming giant had a growing need for easy-to-use collaboration tools and greater mobility.

"We had standardized on Office 2010 / Office 2011 for Mac," says Lindemann. "But our IT team needed to spend less time juggling licenses and escalated help desk requests for email. We plan to add many more users in a short period of time, and that takes careful coordination." InnoGames also wanted to provide Microsoft Outlook and Office functionality for all employees, including an important set of Linux users who were operating without an integrated email, calendaring, and document-management system.

InnoGames turned to Hamburg-based Layer2, a Microsoft Cloud Accelerate Partner, for help in integrating business intelligence information to employees through Microsoft SharePoint on site. Discussions eventually included InnoGames' search for a robust messaging solution.

### SOLUTION

Layer2 led InnoGames to discover Microsoft Office 365, a cloud-based suite of calendaring and productivity tools with anywhere access to email and 24/7 support. "Office 365 holds a lot of potential for our business and provides a great value," says Zillmer. "We looked at Google Enterprise Mail and we just didn't trust our data with them. We know what we're getting with Microsoft."

Moving to the cloud has saved the small IT staff significant hours each week, notes Lindemann. "Deploying Office 365 to new users is simple and takes very little time," he says. "We had to invest some time to get everyone up and running, but we've reclaimed that time and more because there are fewer help desk requests and minimal incremental admin tasks."



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Lindemann notes that round-the-clock support from Microsoft also decreased the demands on his staff. "Our IT team is looking to take the company further by integrating systems and getting more value out of these new tools. We expect to roll out Office 2013 ourselves, and that would have been a nightmare previously. Moving to the cloud has made our jobs easier."

And scaling the services is simple as the company grows. "We're planning to increase our staff this year, but now we don't have to worry about buying new servers and adding IT staff to maintain them," says Lindemann. InnoGames plans to extend Office 365 services to its elite community managers in the near future. "Microsoft offers flexible licensing options, which makes it easy for us to adjust as our needs change," he says.

### BENEFITS

By moving to the cloud, InnoGames has reduced demands on its small IT staff, enabled greater collaboration and mobility, and regained control over its IT services.

#### Gaining Time for Projects

InnoGames employees are all now using the same version of Microsoft Office, and the consistency in applications has reduced the number of help desk tickets. "Office 365 has freed up IT staff to focus on growth-related projects rather than daily tasks," says Lindemann. "We can integrate programs and features more easily now. And we know that our software will always be current. No more wasted time chasing down versions and licenses."

#### Easier Connections

Office 365 has provided InnoGames with robust calendaring and conferencing tools that help make scheduling meetings easier and more productive. "We're a fast-growing company and whether we're scheduling interviews or working together on designs for a new part of a game, these tools have made everyone's jobs easier," says Zillmer.

Anywhere access has led to more productive communication for InnoGames developers and employees, including its Linux users. "Our employees can use any mobile device they want, and Office 365 works on all of them. This has made it easy for employees to stay in contact while traveling and keep on top of priorities," adds Lindemann.

#### Scalability and Control

Lindemann says that adding users as the company grows is easy with the Office 365 flexible licensing plans. "As our staff continues to grow, we're not concerned about getting bogged down with day by day user administration. Even on short notice, we can add a user and get them to work in very little time," he says.

InnoGames had support issues with its hosted email solution, but Office 365 offers a 99.9% uptime guarantee with dedicated support staff to answer questions. "Email outages are a thing of the past," notes Lindemann. "We now have reliable backups and disaster recovery capabilities, should we ever need them. And the level of control with Exchange Online is great. It's simple to manage multiple accounts in a browser window."

Overall, InnoGames' move to Office 365 has proven to be a smart strategy.

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### SOLUTION PARTNER

Layer2 is a specialist for creating custom components and solutions for Microsoft SharePoint, Office 365 and Azure.

Based in Germany, Layer2 offers products and solutions that add additional features to portals based on Microsoft SharePoint technology, e.g. Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007 (MOSS), Microsoft SharePoint Server 2010 / 2013 or the free Microsoft Windows SharePoint Services 3.0 (WSS) / Microsoft SharePoint Foundation 2010 / 2013.

The products – SharePoint web parts, features and solutions - are completely based on the Microsoft .NET Framework and especially designed to run on top of SharePoint technology and to integrate fluently into the user interface. The solutions are sold directly to end-customers worldwide or distributed via a fast growing partner network of resellers and implementers.

For more than 20 years Layer2 has been known as a reliable partner to customers in Central Europe, offering additional consulting and services in the fields of SharePoint, .NET-programming and IT-Infrastructure. As a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner Layer2 offers a broad variety of deep technical knowledge as well as a focus on end users and customers.

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