



Customer Case Study – Entertainment

Santikos Redefines the Movie Theater Experience

Santikos Entertainment gains speed and agility from Rackspace security experts and AWS engineers to bring innovative theaters to an expanding regional audience.

Our customer

Santikos is an industry-leading, family-owned movie theater chain based in San Antonio, Texas, featuring the two largest movie screens in the state, and the first all-laser digital theater in the world.

The obstacles they faced

Santikos needed advanced capabilities to deliver exceptional movie-going experiences for a growing audience — including a secure, PCI-compliant, ready-to-scale online ticketing system.

How we helped

Managed Cloud; Infrastructure; Rackspace Managed Security; Public Cloud – Fanatical Support® for AWS.

What we achieved together

With the ability to securely process a growing number of online transactions, host the latest films, and treat customers to one-of-a-kind laser-digital theater experiences, Santikos has introduced its audience to the new age of cinema.





More than 100 years ago, Louis Santikos, an immigrant from Greece, began opening small movie theaters across San Antonio.

Little did he know, the business he was building would grow into one of the largest family-owned theater chains in the country.

His son, John, who eventually took over from his father and continued growing the business, knew that staying in-step with technology was the only way to offer the type

of movie-going experience his customers demanded. In the 1950s, that meant showing films in color, by the 1980s, it was adding Dolby Digital Stereo across the theater chain.

In recent years, the Santikos brand has stayed tech-savvy by focusing on two areas: the ticketing process, which is now automated online and optimized for high-traffic, and the movie screen itself, which features a proprietary, laser-digital projection system.

Where possible, Santikos has automated many of the processes inside their theaters as well, from the drink and snack bars and bowling alleys included in some larger theaters, to the projection room itself, where

films are shown using a hard drive inserted into the projector (no more messy tape reels).

Throughout this transformation, the Santikos IT team worked with Rackspace to leverage the speed and agility of AWS and to make sure its online platform was secure and PCI compliant.

With the ability to confidently process a growing number of online transactions, host the latest and greatest in film projection and treat customers to a one-of-a-kind theater experience, Santikos has successfully transitioned into the new, digital age of cinema.

Movie screens big enough for Texas

The most recent addition to the Santikos chain is the Casa Blanca Theatre, home to the two largest movie screens in Texas (they both stand at five stories high and 90 feet wide). The Casa Blanca is also the first theater in which every screen is laser-digital. In fact, it's the first all-laser digital theater in the world.

"Laser digital is something that's difficult to describe," says Santikos CEO David Holmes. "You kind of have to see it to understand it. It's on a much bigger platform and instead of having the old technology where the system

is passing light through an aperture, this is a laser-generated image.”

The theater is also fully digital. There is no box office; tickets are purchased online or from a kiosk at the theater entrance and every seat is reserved.

“All of this was done to ensure the smoothest experience for our guests,” says Holmes. “We know people prefer to interact with us electronically, and we know it makes for a better overall experience in our theaters.”

Even before breaking ground, the Santikos IT team looked to Rackspace for help navigating the challenges that would be a part of a project this large.


“We’re good at a lot of things,” says Holmes, “but looking ahead and looking around corners and figuring out what technology challenges we’ll have tomorrow — that’s why we value our partnership with Rackspace.”

Ticket sales awaken

Soon after Santikos had implemented its new online platform, “Star Wars: The Force Awakens” hit theaters nationwide. Online ticket sales spiked across the country, and while several large ticketing websites crashed due to high traffic, this was the test Santikos had been preparing for.

“We slowed, but never went down,” says Holmes. “It became a record day of ticket sales and we knew we were ready for a higher volume of transactions.”

That higher traffic volume also underscored the need for secure, PCI-compliant online transactions, and Rackspace security experts played an integral role in setting up a system that was safe for customers and their critical data.



“Technology is ever-changing. The way it has to integrate from one platform to the website to what happens inside the theater, it all has to tie together and it has to work without a hiccup. We really see our partnership with Rackspace as a key piece of making that work.”

Scott Iden
CIO,
Santikos Entertainment

And with Rackspace support and expertise informing their AWS workloads, the Santikos IT team was able to move forward with confidence.

“We really saw the AWS platform as an important tool because it had the robust, dynamic aspects we were looking for to really be able to scale,” says Santikos CIO Scott Iden.

“On top of that, Rackspace’s influence was key because that’s where the management of the system came into play. We knew we weren’t the experts in this field, and we recognized Rackspace is. We really saw this as an opportunity to lean on the advantages they brought.”

Tied together with the Fanatical Support his team received from their Rackspace counterparts, Iden added that he wasn’t sure how they would have proceeded without that added edge.

“Working with Rackspace enabled Santikos to achieve our goals,” Iden says. “They’re technology goals, but they’re directly tied to the larger vision this company holds.”

Since going through their digital transformation, Santikos has continued to enjoy steady growth in online transactions and zero downtime — even during huge events. And as the company looks to the future, central Texans can expect to see additional Santikos theaters popping up.

“As we continue to take our existing portfolio and upgrade it, not only from a technology platform but from a guest comfort and an ease-of-service platform, we’re also going to look at some new locations,” Holmes says.

“There are parts of our market that are underserved and we would like to provide the Santikos experience to those parts of the market as well.”

“What we were looking for was a provider of a very important core service to us. We saw Rackspace as being a best-in-class provider of that. More importantly, our goal was to find a technology partner. Someone who would not only help us serve our existing needs and address our current vulnerabilities but also someone that would work with us to help anticipate technology changes..”

Scott Iden – CIO, Santikos Entertainment

About Rackspace

Rackspace is modernizing IT in today’s multi-cloud world. By delivering IT-as-a-service, we help customers of all industries, sizes and locations realize the power of digital transformation without the complexity and expense of managing it on their own. Our comprehensive portfolio of managed services across applications, data, security and infrastructure on the world’s leading public and private cloud platforms enables us to provide unbiased expertise. Rackspace has been honored by Fortune, Forbes, Glassdoor and others as one of the best places to work.

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