

Microsoft Azure for Nonprofits

Friends of the Arts Foundation enhanced its engagement with the performing arts community, through Microsoft Azure

Established in 2005, Friends of the Arts Foundation (FOTAF) is a nonprofit dedicated to inspiring greater interest in the performing arts in Thailand, and nurturing young talents within the field. Its work includes organizing numerous performances and festivals each year to build awareness about the arts and help performers gain wider recognition.

The old system

To keep members and the public updated on its activities, the nonprofit disseminates information primarily through its website, social networking accounts, and emails to its member database of volunteers, partners and patrons.

However, FOTAF lacked an integrated communications platform that would allow it to announce its latest programs in a quick and reliable manner. The legacy infrastructure was slow and not user-friendly, which meant that information was difficult and time-consuming to upload. Additionally, its expanding database was quickly outgrowing the storage capabilities of its server, hindering the registration of new members and making database management complex and resource-intensive.

The new system

FOTAF explored several options, but found Microsoft Azure to be best suited to address its operational needs. Using Azure, FOTAF set up a new website, which now serves as its primary communications platform and central hub for all its marketing activities.

The move to the cloud has since equipped FOTAF with:

- Enhanced communication capabilities
- More streamlined database management
- Scalable infrastructure to implement new initiatives

Solutions used:



Using Azure, Friends of the Arts Foundation (FOTAF) transformed its IT infrastructure to:



Update their website up to 20 times faster than before, and support growing web traffic



Streamline their website and database management, resulting in time savings of over 10 hours a week



Launch new initiatives, including a distance learning portal that will serve up to 400,000 Thai students

"FOTAF is not only about the arts. Our aim is to provide a well-rounded education to a new generation of students in Thailand. Thanks to Microsoft and its cloud-based tools, we are confident that our new initiatives will take off successfully."

- Kim MacGregor, Co-founder and Director (Strategic Planning) of Friends of the Arts Foundation

Benefits from the new system



Improved communications to better engage the performing arts community



Friends of the Arts Foundation website hosted on Azure

Hosting their website on Azure has significantly boosted FOTAF's level of engagement with the performing arts community. Staff can now upload new information via the cloud 10-20 times faster than before, allowing them to ensure that the website stays updated with FOTAF's latest activities.

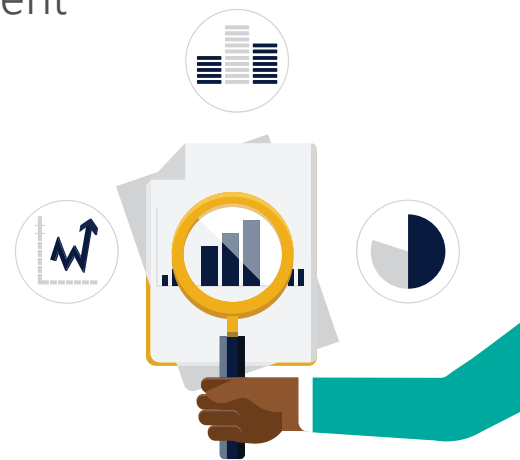
FOTAF also no longer faces bandwidth limitation issues associated with its previous on premise platform. With Azure, it can flexibly ramp up cloud-based capacity to cope with seasonal spikes in website traffic—commonly experienced during festival periods, when traffic can increase ten-fold from the usual 3,000 to 30,000 visitors.

"Azure streamlined our website operations by automating most of the back end processes, cutting at least 10 hours of technology upkeep per week," said Kim MacGregor, Co-founder and Director (Strategic Planning) of FOTAF. "This allows our staff to focus their efforts on building greater awareness for our events, the artists and most importantly, the performing arts."

More streamlined and efficient database management

The reliability of Microsoft's cloud-based tools also enabled FOTAF to continue growing its member database, without concerns over storage limitations. The automated registration and reporting features simplified database management, helping staff save up to two hours a week on member registration processes.

Azure also enabled FOTAF to roll out new membership plans, an initiative that previously could not be executed on the legacy database. Azure SQL Database, FOTAF found that its staff are now able to update and manage databases for the different types of memberships with minimal time and effort, to better tailor its programs for patrons and donor organizations.



Cloud-empowered to put new initiatives into motion

Azure empowered FOTAF to move full speed ahead with its other initiatives, and broaden its outreach beyond the performing arts community. FOTAF is planning to deploy an online marketplace using Azure, designed for artists to showcase their work to a global community. The nonprofit is further developing a distance learning portal for its website that would give over 400 schools and an estimated 400,000 students in Bangkok access to a wide variety of e-learning modules. Materials will be hosted on the cloud, giving students the freedom to learn about virtually any subject, wherever they are.

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