



"The relationship we have with Melbourne is outstanding, I cannot fault them..."

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## Who are you?

I'm Aaron Beadle, Head of Infrastructure and Technology for Flubit [www.flubit.com](http://www.flubit.com)

## Company

Flubit is a technology start-up that creates better prices for online shoppers through its unique demand led e-commerce platform. Users find the product they want to buy on Amazon.co.uk and then simply paste the link into the Flubit.com website. Flubit creates a better, private offer for the customer and if they order the product it is then fulfilled by one of our integrated merchants.

### Tell us more.

The secret to Flubit's success and high order conversion rates is that customers come to us when they are ready to buy to get a better, unique price. We traditionally work with small and medium size UK marketplace retailers diverting sales away from the big online stores to our merchants. We don't charge a commission and there are no set up fees to join our platform.

We recently launched an exciting partnership with Barclaycard's Bespoke Offers giving them access to our technology and merchant base and allowing their users to get better prices.

### So tell us about your IT platform. What have you got?

We have grown with Melbourne from having a single dedicated server in August of 2011 to a huge automated

platform with more than 40 VMs, seven dedicated machines and four databases with security systems ranged all over the infrastructure. We have just moved the entire platform from shared cloud hosting to a private cloud solution to give us greater control over provisioning and costs and to meet the greater security requirements being placed upon us by our partners.

### How have you had to adapt your platform to work with partners?

Flubit is not very old – we first started to rollout the solution in 2012 when we ordered our first four VMs and another dedicated server. So essentially we are still a start-up but we have always thought big and set ourselves up from day one to be scalable. Recent partnerships have enabled us to enhance our current IT provision and adopt new approaches more akin with an established, larger corporate. Over the last year we've scaled





## We'll create you a lower price

Demand a better offer on any product you're about to buy

a lot ensuring everything has been built 'as a service' meaning we have had to rip every system apart and make it all N+1.

In total we have our partner platform; the main Flubit platform for consumers; WeFlubit which is the site for merchants to manage their stock and switch their stock flows on and off; and BeFlubit for using our API. We've got all these systems which operate separately within the one platform and don't affect each other.

### How have you dealt with the security aspects?

Working with large partners means that our focus has had to be on due diligence.

First of all we had to create a DMZ (demilitarized zone) - a neutral zone between the Flubit database and the frontend applications. We then had to set up a VPN for access, put in new load balancing, and install a co-located Intrusion Detection System. We also had to introduce Two Tier Authentication. That would be a real sticking point with some hosting companies who wouldn't want something like that imposed on them but it wasn't a problem for Melbourne. A small number of staff were authenticated without any problem. We then had to do extensive PEN testing and set up robust monitoring.

As part of our partner requirements we have to calculate certain transition and transaction times and make sure certain specifications are met. Melbourne have helped us deliver on everything that we've asked for. It was pretty much flawless.

### What technology are you using?

We were having problems with the latency of our MySQL replication, which meant APIs were being served to servers which did not have the correct data because of tiny time lapses. Melbourne introduced us to a new technology called Galera that they thought would solve the problem for us. Galera provides near synchronous replication meaning it updates all the servers before it commits so the data is always there. Although it was relatively new technology we trusted Melbourne to deliver something that would do the job and work well for us. It was a bit of a learning curve but it has been a fantastic solution for us.

We now have something like 100+ systems behind Flubit that automate different and specific functions.



### Why did you choose Melbourne?

When I joined Flubit we were with a shared hosting provider in the US but it was clear we were going to need a new UK-based hosting partner as we had

big plans. I knew Melbourne as I'd used them to host a not-for-profit internet radio website I run and they were great to work with. I went straight back to them for Flubit. They were way ahead of the crowd in how they could help us as an ambitious and rapidly growing start-up. I had huge confidence in them and the level of support they could provide.

### What's your relationship like with Melbourne?

The relationship we have with Melbourne is outstanding, I cannot fault them. They've been with us all the way including when they became part of the wider iomart Group and they have continued to show us the same level of expertise and support throughout. Our account manager checks in with us once a week and there are a couple of stand-out individuals in their technical team who regularly go the extra mile for us. They are superb and know our systems inside out.

For me you have to look at the bigger picture with your hosting provider not just the cost. You have to look at your confidence in their team, your confidence in their support and Melbourne give you all of that.

With the level of infrastructure they have, the support they provide and the solution ideas they come up with for our rapidly changing needs, Melbourne really are an extension to my team.

Melbourne have led us to lots of new technologies and have been incredibly supportive for which I can't thank them enough for.

#### Phone us

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