

Acquia® Support Stories

Sticking with a Problem until it's Solved



Four Acquia teams around the world coordinate their work to complete a “critical” task over the course of a summer weekend.

The problem surfaced in early August, very late in the work week: 3:38 pm (EDT) on Friday afternoon.

The customer, a major American university in the Midwest US, was rapidly approaching server capacity, a common problem that many organizations experience.

Acquia Support had been tracking the situation, and alerting the university, but now that a migration was imminent, before an expected influx of new users at the start of the new school year, the university discovered that it didn't have the capacity to pull off the move to a larger container.

More capacity was needed ASAP to enable the migration. And... “we'd really like this migration to get done this weekend, which is off-hours for our users.”

Fortunately for the university, and its web development group, this was not an impossible task for Acquia Support. Over the course of a single weekend, the Acquia team was able to pull off the migration by deftly passing the monitoring of the task from team to team around the world: from Toronto, Canada, to Portland, Oregon, to Reading, United Kingdom, and finally back to Toronto.

The Acquia Support team consists of more than 70 professionals, with more than 500+ years experience. But the way the Acquia Support team handled this late request showed something else: the depth of Acquia's resources, unmatched by any other digital services company.

No other digital services organization can deliver on a significant weekend support request, and track it in such a sustained fashion. Because no other organization has the ‘round the world locations to keep working on an issue 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The Details

Three minutes after the Friday afternoon request for a weekend 200GB server migration, Acquia Support Engineer Richard Eriksson, based in Toronto, responded to the customer that he was conferring with the Support team, and would be back to him shortly.

At 4:01 pm EDT, just 22 minutes after the request, Richard confirmed that the team would be able to start the migration over that day.

“You can't just be a support drone at Acquia. You have to be dynamic detective who can put pieces together and make correlations. You have to always be willing to dig in deeper.”

— Brian Kropff, Acquia Customer Support Engineer

Success Enabled With:

- Acquia Cloud Enterprise
- Acquia Ready
- Global Support
- Remote Administration
- Drupal 7



Richard Eriksson Aug 06 16:01 (assign)

We should be able to do this today. This will take the entire server offline for the duration of the upsize. Would you like us to proceed?

Richard Eriksson -- Support Engineer

Two hours and nineteen minutes later, at 6:20 pm, Richard gave the customer an update: “The upsize is well underway, and we will let you know when it's completed.”



Richard Eriksson Aug 06 18:20

The upsize is well underway, and we will let you know when it's completed.

Richard Eriksson -- Support Engineer

Two members of the Acquia Ops team, Alex Roney and James Goin, were making the migration happen.

From Richard the project moved onto Brian Kropff in Portland, where it was late afternoon. Brian contacted the customer at 8:58 pm.


"It looks like the resize has completed," he wrote. "Please take a look and let me know if anything is still an issue."

Turns out there was an issue. At 11:11 pm, that same Friday night, the customer reported that the site was throwing timeouts.

"While I'm able to log into the server via ssh, the server is not performing as well as it did prior to the storage increase," the customer reported.

This is not unusual. Since the restore was keeping the database busy, it was slowing the entire server, and occasionally preventing PHP from serving pages. Support began monitoring the situation.

By 3:32 am on Saturday, Virginie Jarosik, working with an Acquia Support team based in Reading, had taken over the ticket. She reported that the restore had taken an hour, and had succeeded.

**Virginie Jarosik** Aug 07 03:32 (assign)
Hello [redacted]
I took over this ticket from Brian.
The restore is now over, and lasted more than 1 hour

[02:18:53] [02:18:53] Started

[03:17:23] [03:17:23] Done

It succeed.

Later, Virginie added that she was keeping an eye on the timeouts.

At 11:00 am on Saturday morning, Richard Eriksson, in Toronto, was back on the case.

At 4:02 pm he checked in with the customer to make sure that the timeouts had gone away. If not, he offered to investigate.

At 11:47 pm on Saturday night, the customer logged in to report that the temporary timeout problem, a byproduct of the restore, had resolved itself, and the site was functioning properly. A day ahead of the deadline.

Ticket closed.

Later, the customer evaluated his experience with Acquia:

"Outstanding service," he wrote. "The after-hours team at Acquia responded quickly and professionally to help us during this critical inflection point. As shifts ended they passed the ticket smoothly on to the next team member and our large and irregular request was satisfied within hours. Kudos."

Rating **Good, I'm satisfied**
Outstanding service. The after-hours team at Acquia responded quickly and professionally to help us during this critical inflection point. As shifts ended they passed the ticket smoothly on to the next team member and our large and irregular request was satisfied within hours. Kudos.

One reason for the success of this weekend migration: Acquia was able to monitor it around the clock, in collaboration with the Acquia Ops team, by coordinating teams around the globe -- from Toronto, to Portland, to Reading, and back to Portland -- over a single weekend. From beginning to end, the project circled the world.

This kind of service is possible because of Acquia's 24x7 support, available in every region of the world, with

staffing across four continents.

Acquia Support taps this capacity nearly every day.

“It’s easy for us to work after hours on a weekday,” recalled Brian Kropff. “We just move it to a different part of the world.”

As this interaction demonstrated, Acquia Support’s depth and distribution can also handle a summer weekend support request.

Kropff’s skills are typical of Acquia Support. He acquired deep Drupal experience working at a digital agency, building sites on the Drupal platform. While there he discovered that he was “very good at finding bugs in people’s code,” he said. But that’s not his only skill.

“There are so many parts of a typical Drupal site, one specialty is not enough,” he said. “You can’t just be a support drone at Acquia. You have to be dynamic detectives who can put pieces together and make correlations. You have to always be willing to dig in deeper.”

Acquia Support expertise extends from cloud operations and monitoring, to deep expertise in Drupal and site configuration (cache setting, database tuning, avoiding common Drupal set-up errors, etc.), and everything in between.

“We all have long histories dealing with customers who are handling difficult situations,” said Kropff.

“If there’s a problem, we’re available,” Kropff added. “It’s as simple as that.”

