Connecting Users and Web Servers in a Global Community

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—Osnat Faineru, ICQ Product Manager

ICQ AT A GLANCE

Registered users	400,000,000+
Messages sent per day	400,000,000+
User connection time	5+ hours/day
Company location	Tel Aviv, Israel

BUSINESS NEED
Update ICQmail service with rich new features, premium options and a more modern user interface.

SOLUTION
Mail2World Email for ISPs
> 2GB Premium Webmail
> POP3, IMAP4, SMTP, Mobile Mail Access
> Integrated Anti-virus and Spam Protection
> Online Administrative Panel
> 24/7/365 Customer Care

BOTTOM LINE
Mail2World powers enriched, outsourced email services for 2,000,000+ ICQmail subscribers and advances integration of email into ICQ's instant messaging client.

Background

In November 1996, a small startup company based in Israel launched ICQ®, a new Internet service that brought computer users together for the first time as a true online community. Although ICQ ("I Seek You") technology revolutionized the way people converse online by inter-connecting them with each other as well as with Web servers, its release generated little fanfare. But six months later, spreading by almost evangelical "word of mouse," ICQ claimed the title of world's largest online communication network. Another month and the service would welcome its one-millionth user. In June 1997, for the first time on the Internet, 100,000 concurrent online subscribers were handled by ICQ. When the service reached 10 million users in mid-1998, it was acquired by America Online, Inc. (AOL) to form ICQ, Inc.

Originally designed to simply send text messages across the Internet, the ICQ service has evolved into a complex, multimedia communication tool. Today's ICQ is one of the most robust instant messaging and enhanced communications services in the market today and serves a community of more than 400 million registered users. The ICQ client is the most downloaded software on CNet.com in a decade. The ICQ infrastructure can handle hundreds of thousands of simultaneous online users who enjoy features such as file transfer, voice chat, SMS paging, post-it notes, to-do lists, greeting cards, birthday reminders and links to ICQ's homepage with communities for sports, traveling, movies and more. The company's robust instant messaging software, enhanced communications features and dynamic community are now available in 20 languages free of charge at www.icq.com. ICQ's mission to provide users worldwide with reliable, easy-to-use and innovative communication solutions made email a natural extension of ICQ's wide selection of communication tools. In fact, the company has offered email services since 1999 and was the first to integrate email and instant messaging.

Business Need

The extraordinary success of ICQ inspired many other companies to follow ICQ's path into this new industry. To enhance its competitive position and improve its existing email service, ICQ needed to refresh its mail service with a new look and feel that included a richer array of up-to-date features and an upgrade option for premium services.

Mail2World Solution

In 2004, ICQ's Business team conducted a thorough search for mail service providers; the ICQ Product team then evaluated potential candidates. Ultimately, Mail2World rose to the top of ICQ's list of candidates as the most suitable partner. "Our first impression of Mail2World was very good," stated Osnat Faineru, ICQ's product manager. "During initial talks with the MailCentro team, we felt they understood our needs and demands. Our impression was that the company has the ability to provide fast implementation, a solid product, fast responses and a professional team. During the selection process, Mail2World representatives were cooperative, and negotiations were conducted in a professional, direct manner that made the business of forming our partnership easy and uncomplicated. Throughout the development phase, Mail2World's staff proved many times over that our first impression of the company was correct: everyone we worked with was indeed responsive, helpful and professional in all our interactions. Thanks to special migration tools developed by Mail2World, implementation of our new ICQmail service was remarkably smooth and fast. Mail2Wiorld technicians were even able to reactivate mail addresses that we thought were lost during migration, and multiple accounts were closed to keep the database clean."

Value

Powered by Mail2World, ICQmail is now a central part of ICQ's wide selection of communication products and is placed permanently on ICQ.com Web pages. ICQmail is accessible via the ICQ client, and ICQmail and the ICQmail Dashboard are promoted through banners and promotions on the ICQ Web site, Welcome Screen, etc. As of early 2005, more than 2,000,000 ICQ customers are subscribed to ICQmail.

"We are pleased to provide our users with a solid product that's easy to use and offers a variety of premium services," continues Faineru. "We know from experience that operations like merging mailboxes can create some problems for the users, so we are always prepared to provide quick responses. Based on the insignificant number of users requiring support or reporting errors during the merging process, as well as user feedback through our focus groups and message boards, we know that overall our users are satisfied with the new ICQmail service. In short, we believe we have succeeded in reaching our goal of improving the overall ICQ email experience.

ICQ has a highly loyal and dedicated audience, and we receive a great deal of feedback and many ideas from our users. To deliver a good service, a company must always listen to feedback and strive to fulfill users' needs and demands in the best way possible. We chose Mail2World as a partner because they share our respect for users and take pride in constantly providing the best service possible. Mail2World has been very responsive and cooperative in the daily support we receive, maintenance of the site and co-development of mail-related projects, such as the ICQmail Dashboard Xtra and implementation of ICQmail in the ICQ Toolbar. We look forward to implementing many more of our users' suggestions and ideas in the future in cooperation with Mail2World."

About Mail2World

Mail2World, (www.mail2world.net) designs, delivers and supports a technology-leading and award-winning suite of hosted business-class email and online collaboration services. Custom-engineered to handle tens of millions of mailboxes, Mail2World's Messaging Hosting & Collaboration Platform addresses the growing need for advanced, ultra-reliable and cost-effective email and collaboration in global enterprises, small and medium-sized businesses and large-scale service providers. The company's growing list of customers includes prominent organizations from around the world, such as publicly-traded corporations, top five colleges in Newsweek's America's Best Colleges 2007 report and some of the largest and most-recognized online properties. Founded in early 2000, Mail2World is a privately held corporation headquartered in Los Angeles, Calif.

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