



About Spirit Airlines

Spirit Airlines is the eighth-largest commercial airline in North America, operating more than 400 daily flights to 60 destinations in the U.S., Latin America, and the Caribbean. The airline and its base of nearly 7,000 employees are supported from Spirit's headquarters in Miramar, Florida, a region frequently affected by severe weather. Over the last 25 years, the state has lost hundreds of lives and billions of dollars in damages from storms such as Hurricane Andrew (1992) and Hurricane Irma (2017).

“As an airline, we must be very resilient and have an orchestrated DR plan. Zerto has helped us deliver the ability to easily move our operations to the cloud in the face of any disruption.”

Rocky Wiggins
CIO, Spirit Airlines

Even in this stormy climate, Spirit Airlines relies on IT to help keep the company's planes and passengers in the air, supporting everything from online apps, reservations, maintenance, ticket counters, baggage, and air traffic management. Downtime is unacceptable. Just one hour of its reservations systems being offline can cost the airline \$500,000; as a 24/7 business, its applications and IT services need to be continuously available no matter what potential disruption may strike.

Zerto Helps Spirit Airlines Avoid Impact of Hurricane Irma with On-Demand Migration of Key Applications

Challenges

- After experiencing rapid business growth and an expanded datacenter footprint, Spirit Airlines needed to simplify their data migration and disaster recovery (DR) processes to provide resilience in the face of unplanned disruptions
- Bolster its business continuity program to quickly move operations away from the path of storms like Hurricane Irma, and protect customers from travel disruptions and employees from job disruptions
- Mitigate the risks of downtime and data loss through a quick and seamless migration that included in-house data and applications along with third-party solutions over 45 servers

Solution

- Build a business strategy to ensure resilience and geodiversity for its complex IT infrastructure and systems to withstand natural disasters
- Gain the ability to rapidly orchestrate an advanced disaster plan in a few clicks, moving critical operations with the help of Zerto's IT solution
- Keep operations, including ticketing, maintenance, reservations, processing, and manifests, all running smoothly without interrupting the customer experience

Zerto Results



Less than 3 Hours

Fast and painless datacenter migration



Zero errors

Reduced RPOs and RTOs



Eliminate complexities

Manually migrating servers

Datacenter Operations Redirected and Landed On Time with Zerto

When working in a hurricane-prone region like Miramar, Fla., it's not unusual to prepare for major disasters.

The Spirit Airlines IT team is all too familiar with the frequency and severity of these storms. Nearly every member has experienced some form of disaster preparedness and recovery during a hurricane, whether with Spirit or another major airline. With so much of the company's operations riding on entire operations center—supporting reservations, flight management, maintenance, and ticket sales—they were well aware of the importance of being able to relocate Spirit's datacenter in the face of the next meteorological threat.

Regardless of the weather, downtime is never an option. When the reservations website goes down, the company can lose as much as \$500,000 an hour. Even more precious is the protection of its passengers and employees, and key systems that ensure their safety must stay up 24/7.

So a year before Hurricane Irma made its way to Florida with sustained winds of 112 mph and gusts up to 160 mph, the Spirit Airlines IT team began preparing and practicing with the Zerto DR solution. Before Zerto, all server migrations were manually conducted, which can take up to 12 hours. "We have had plenty of experience with DR planning and enabling business continuity with Spirit Airlines being headquartered in South Florida," James Nolin, senior director of IT at Spirit Airlines.

"After the company began growing rapidly with a new level of critical obligations, we started talking to Zerto for ideas and best practices to make sure our customers and our employees are protected despite any business disruptions."

With a well-practiced migration plan in place with Zerto,

the Spirit Airlines IT team gathered to execute the Zerto plan as Irma rushed to shore on Sept. 10, 2017. But not everyone was as confident about the outcome; one of Spirit's vendors had major reservations.

"About six hours before we were ready to cut over to the migration, another vendor didn't share our confidence that the move would work given the complexity and number of other airlines that relied on the same program. We told them we had done these three times using Zerto for upgrades for datacenter moves, and we felt very confident that it was going to work."

After initiating the cutover, Nolin and the team completed the migration of all operational systems servers and their data in less than three hours. Around the same time, Spirit officials also began moving all Florida employees and their families to Detroit, Michigan to get them out of harm's way. With the aid of a Citrix virtual desktop environment, employees were back up and working the next day.

Nolin said the Zerto solution was much faster than anyone expected. The team had set checkpoints to gauge the move's progress, and at every point, they were much further down the path of completion than they expected.

"We had no Windows errors or any other issues. We just had a couple of small configuration adjustments to make mostly on the network side of the house. But once we took care of those, we were up and running—smooth sailing and very happy customers at that point," Nolin said.

Now with Zerto, Spirit Airlines is prepared to adjust and relocate its operations on short notice, ensuring its business continues to run smoothly—even if a natural disaster strikes—while protecting its employees and customers.

Team at Spirit involved with this project:

Technical Team: Martin Painter - Sr. Manager, Systems; Yudesh Gosine - Supervisor, IT Systems/OPS; Jennifer Ballard - Infrastructure Program Manager; Lanny Ballard - Network/UC Architect; Joel Vidal - Sr. Engineer, Systems; Rafael Betancourt - Sr. Engineer, Infrastructure Systems; Jason Macfarlane - Sr. Analyst, IT Security;

Mohit Kalra - Sr. Mgr., Information Sec; Pedro Byrne - Mgr., Data Services; Satvik Gangam - Admin, B2B; Christopher Pino - Sr. Engineer, Systems; Manny Cortes - Mgr., IT End User Tech; Terrell Bramwell - Admin, Application; OCC/Business Side; Rory Hight - Mgr., OCC Tech Support; John Chadwick - Mgr., OCC Training; Carol Castellanos - Mgr., Crew Scheduling

About Zerto

Zerto, a Hewlett Packard Enterprise company, empowers customers to run an always-on business by simplifying the protection, recovery, and mobility of on-premises and cloud applications. Zerto's cloud data management and protection solution eliminates the risks and complexity of modernization and cloud adoption across private, public, and hybrid deployments. The simple, software-only solution uses continuous data protection at scale to converge disaster recovery, backup, and data mobility. Zerto is trusted by over 9,500 customers globally and is powering offerings for Microsoft Azure, IBM Cloud, AWS, Google Cloud, Oracle Cloud, and more than 350 managed service providers.