Category number: A. 8

Category name: Best Use of Content Marketing

Programme/initiative name: ‘Hands on with Microsoft”

Agency: UM London

Brand or client: Microsoft

URL or microsite:

Microsoft Cloud OS RegCast:

http://whitepapers.theregister.co.uk/paper/view/3012/

SUMMARY

Our job was to **raise IT Pros' awareness** of Microsoft's Cloud OS and drive purchase intent with a budget of £127,500. The activity ran from September to December 2013.

IT Pros have been lacking the knowledge and confidence to push for Microsoft Cloud Services within their organisations. We needed to change this and **demonstrate the value** Microsoft's Cloud OS could deliver.

To convince the busy IT Pros that Microsoft's Cloud OS was the solution for them, we needed to create reliable, **useful content.**

We created the first ever live, free-of-charge professional **online training sessions** for Microsoft's Cloud OS, in partnership with trusted IT title, ***The Register*.**

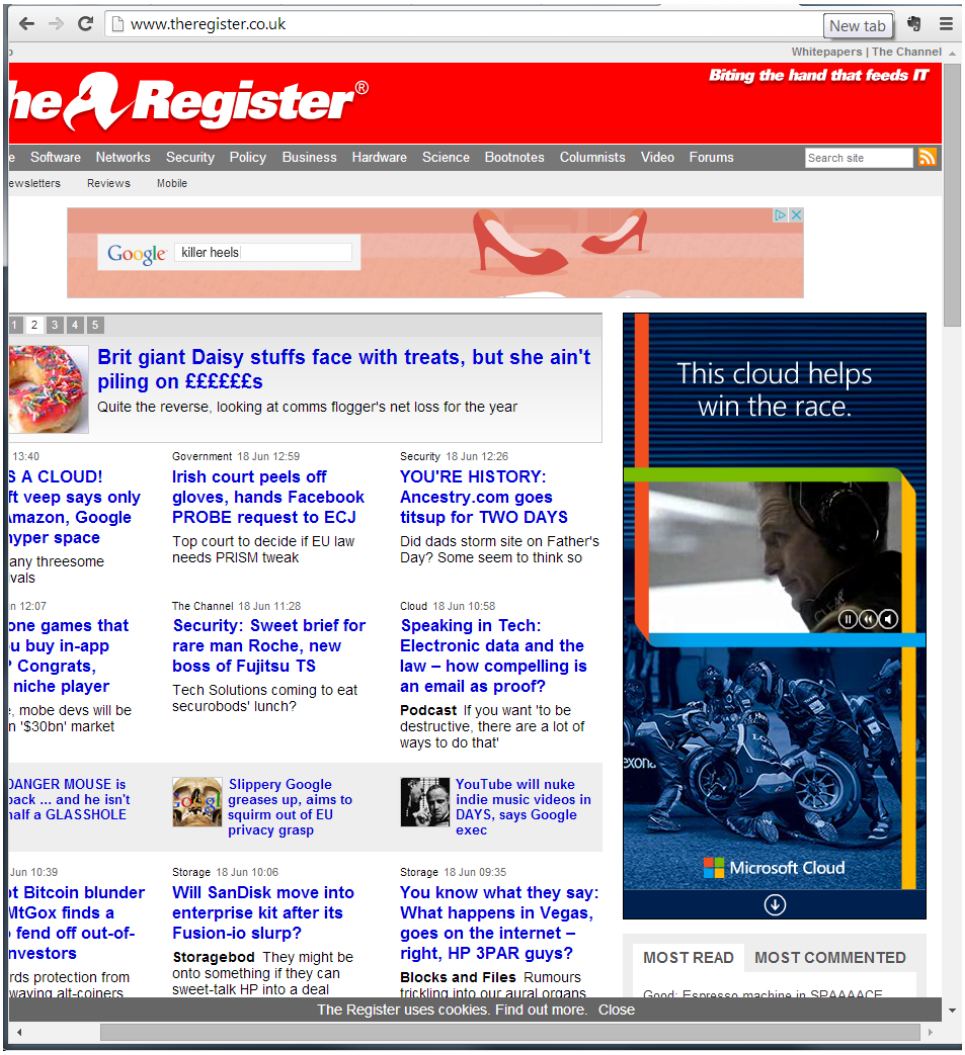
We ran **six, one-hour 'RegCasts'** on Cloud OS technologies. To back it up, we created tech articles by The Register's journalists for further hands-on insight for the readers.

By taking this content approach we were able to bypass the resistance of IT Pros that objected to IT vendors "selling" to them, by giving them something of **genuine value**:

- Confirmed business leads of **$400,000** from our activity
- Two of the largest-ever viewing figures in The Register's history with over **1,800 users**
- We reduced **cost-per-**engagement by 97%

Wordcount: 191




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MAIN REPORT

About the client company

Microsoft is the well-known American multinational corporation that develops, manufactures, licenses, supports and sells computer software, consumer electronics and personal computers and services.

Strategy – broader business issues the company is facing

Microsoft had made it the company's mission to be at the forefront of Cloud computing, a game-changing development in IT.

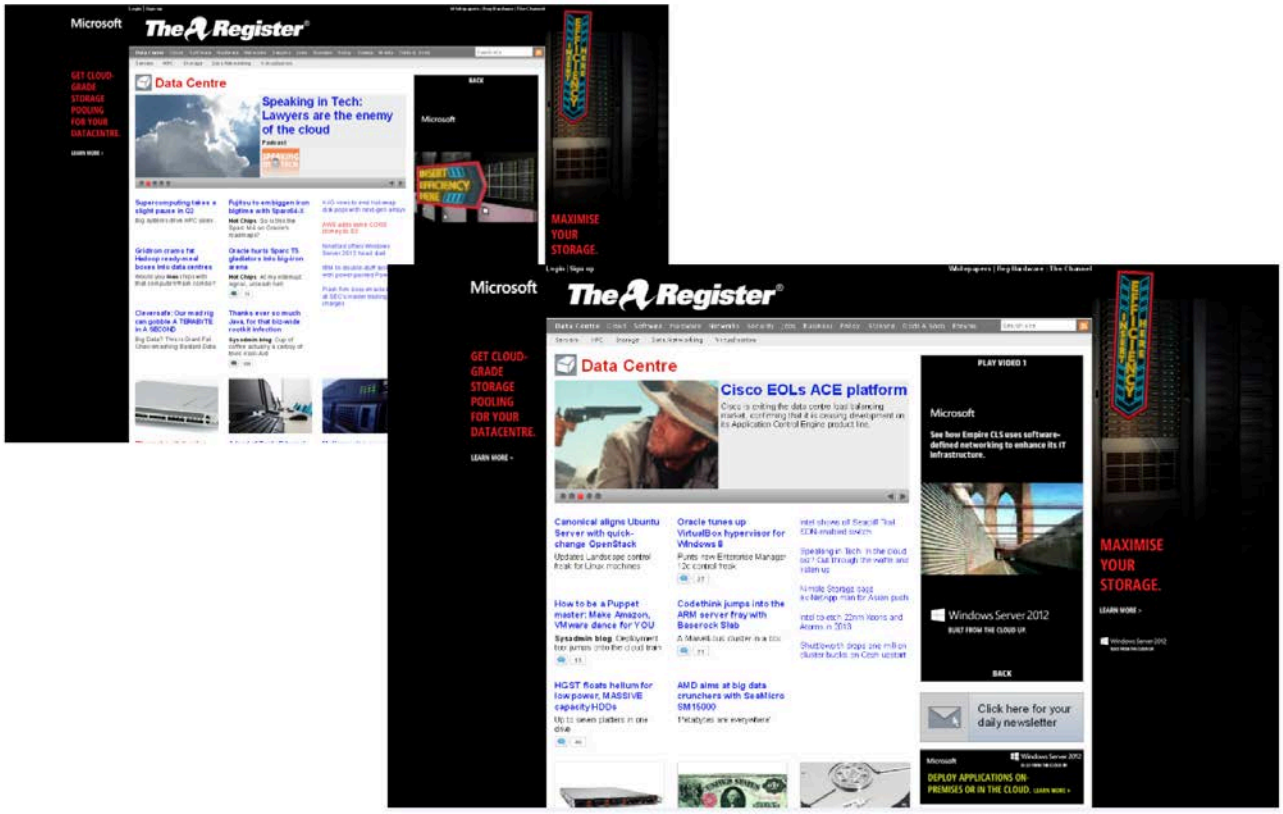
Microsoft's Cloud OS was a big bet for the company, and it represented an entirely new way of working for **IT professionals**. Convincing the IT world of the value unique to Microsoft's offering would be crucial to Microsoft's success in the Cloud market.

IT Pros have been lacking the knowledge and confidence to push for Microsoft Cloud Services within their organisations. We needed to change this and **demonstrate the value** Microsoft's Cloud OS could deliver for their organisations, to catch their attention when they considered upgrading their current Microsoft systems or considering competitors.

Objectives of the campaign

Our job was to **raise IT Pros' awareness** of Microsoft's Cloud OS and **drive purchase intent**.

Essentially, this was about keeping Microsoft at the forefront of Cloud Computing by **engaging and migrating** fans of close competitors (VMware) over to Microsoft's Cloud OS. Given IT Pros' brand loyalty, and scepticism towards Microsoft, this was set to be one of our **biggest challenges** in over ten years of working with Microsoft.



Pic 1. The Register is the most-respected resource for IT professionals

The target audience

We had global advertising assets for print and online, but we knew standard display advertising wouldn't cut it. So we developed and worked with **three key insights** to build our plan:

- **IT Pros** are hurried and stressed. They are **under-resourced** and spend most of their time fire-fighting issues, when they would rather be researching better technologies
- **IT Pros** are savvy and cynical. They want useful **information that helps them do their jobs, not high-level marketing**
- **IT Pros** love to learn how to 'do stuff', from **trusted sources** online, tablet, mobile and in print



Pic 2. We created a series of 'RegCast' videos around Microsoft's Cloud OS

Media, channels or techniques used

To convince the busy IT Pros that Microsoft's Cloud OS was the solution for them, we needed to **create reliable, useful content**. There was a gap in the market for free, quality live digital events training IT Pros how to 'do' the things they need to do, on our new Cloud OS technology.

We created the first ever live, free-of-charge professional **online training**

sessions for Microsoft's Cloud OS. This would allow us to deliver quality, informative content to an audience who were there to learn.

To add further **credibility**, the training would be delivered by a highly regarded IT trainer called QA, instead of Microsoft. This approach would 'nip in the bud' any objections by the IT Pros that they were being overtly sold to.

To help us share this content with a wide audience, we forged a **partnership with The Register**, the largest IT site in the UK, using their RegCast Webcast platform to reach 1.6m IT Professionals.

The normal RegCast is an 'overview' of a given technology in a studio for an elite group of people. Our approach was completely different; this was to be about showing, demonstrating and **getting specific** about areas of Microsoft's Cloud OS technology to as **wide an audience** as possible.

QA typically delivers training in event form. But for us, they repurposed training sessions for the Webcast format and **aligned** with Microsoft's Cloud OS agenda. In doing so, they delivered sessions covering **specific product features** for the readers, selected based on real-world customer insights.

We ran **six, one-hour RegCasts** on the Cloud OS technologies, ranging from Azure to SQL Server to Hyper V. The format saw a trainer from QA and The Register's key presenter/journalist Tim Philips run through live demonstrations of the products and best practice.

They were able to demonstrate everything Microsoft needed to convey around the products and services but in an **informative and engaging** way – viewers could even feed questions to the presenter, which were then addressed at the end of the session.

By making this **free to air** and delivering it through The Register, rather than the event platform, we opened up this informative and engaging content to a **wide audience**.

We follow up with tech **articles** by The Register's journalists for further hands-on insight for the readers, **slide decks** for download and posted the video for **on-demand** viewing.

Timescales of the campaign

The campaign was planned and executed for September, 2013, and ran until December 2013.

Budgets

These details were provided to judges in the original submission but are commercially sensitive and therefore confidential.

Results

By taking this content approach we were able to bypass the resistance of IT Pros that objected to IT vendors "selling" to them, by giving them something of genuine value:

- Confirmed business leads of **$400,000** from our activity, impact far beyond the objective
- Two of the **largest-ever viewing figures** in The Register's history with over **1,800 users** watching the first training session. Amazingly, viewers watched an **average of 50 minutes** of the hour-long session. Our supporting article content stream achieved over 20,000 views.
- **44,000** on-demand views
- **6k live viewers** in total, spending on average 45 minutes absorbing Microsoft's content
- A highly efficient **cost-per-view of £2.65**, from a small budget

To put this CPV figure in perspective, we **typically average 250** viewers per gated webcast at a cost per view of £100, so this approach has been **97% more efficient** at driving views and engagement with our audience.

Client testimonial

Phil Evans, Marketing Communications Lead, said: *"These online seminars offered something really valuable to IT Pros – authentic, expert knowledge. UM London used RegCast to demonstrate all the great features of Microsoft Cloud OS, without resorting to the hard-sell. The direct business leads we've received prove how effective this strategy was."*

We also had some great **IT Pro feedback**, some of which even applauded the 'lack' of marketing:

"This was gauged at the correct technical level. Webcasts like this help me select products that can add value and offer costs savings to the business"

"Excellent presentation, more of the same please. So much better than the simplified marketing pap being trotted out these days."

"Very good - all useful comments and no marketing!"

Wordcount: 999

Supporting material supplied

NA

Appendix

NA

Submission ends