Randstad Deutschland GmbH & Co. KG

Full data protection in the cloud

Randstad Germany has been helping companies in this country fill vacancies since 1968. As well as applicants who are looking for a suitable job. The HR service provider is part of Randstad N.V., which was founded in Amsterdam in 1960. Its service portfolio ranges from traditional temporary employment and direct personnel placement to specialized staffing solutions such as inhouse services.

In order to keep up with the times in the fast-moving HR services industry, Randstad has been driving digital transformation for many years. In the process, the service provider is digitalizing a growing number of processes; particularly at the interface between Randstad consultants, clients, and candidates, i.e., successfully placed applicants.

The "MeinRandstad Portal" plays an important role here. Candidates use it for digital time recording and customers use it to check invoices. It is linked to apps that candidates can use to view their shift schedules, chat, or submit vacation requests. Most of the information is personal data, which Randstad must ensure it protects in light of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Deutsche Telekom and Randstad

The Task:
In accordance with the GDPR, Randstad must ensure data protection for all personal information in the MeinRandstad Portal and the associated apps. Since customers and candidates need to be able to access it at any time, performance and security are required around the clock – and powerful cloud resources are needed for this.

The Solution:
With the Open Telekom Cloud, Kretschmer + Partner, Randstad's IT service provider, uses a data privacy-compliant public cloud to operate the portal and apps. The software runs fail-safe in two high-availability zones in Telekom's data center.

The Advantages:
As a European hyperscaler, the Open Telekom Cloud offers flexible and highly-scalable cloud services. Since all personal data remains in Germany and the cloud provider is subject to German law, Randstad can comply 100 percent with the requirements of the GDPR.

The Customer: Randstad Deutschland GmbH & Co. KG

The Challenge

Initially, Kretschmer + Partner, Randstad's IT service provider, operated both the MeinRandstad Portal and the apps in its own data center. For more than 15 years, the two companies have worked together in a spirit of trust to successfully shape Randstad's digital ecosystem.

To benefit from the powerful, scalable resources of a public cloud, Kretschmer + Partner migrated the portal to a US hyperscaler in 2016. At the time, the "Privacy Shield" data protection agreement still regulated data processing between the EU and the US. However, in the summer of 2020, the European Court of Justice concluded that the agreement did not provide adequate protection and overturned the Privacy Shield. Since then, there has been no official policy for processing personal data in the US. As a result, since US hyperscalers are subject to US legislation and thus to the Patriot Act, US authorities could, for example, access personal data without a court order.

"At this point, at the latest, it was clear that we had to make improvements in terms of data protection," says Carsten Priebs, CIO at Randstad. Kretschmer + Partner, therefore, actively sought a GDPR-compliant public cloud for Randstad. The requirements?

It should offer the same performance and functionality as a US hyperscaler. However, the cloud should come from a German provider that could guarantee that all sensitive and personal data would be stored and processed within Germany.

The Solution

The decision was made in favor of the Open Telekom Cloud. It impressed the company management both in terms of data protection and hyperscaling. The portal and apps have been running productively on the Open Telekom Cloud since October 2021. To ensure that all data is redundant, Randstad uses two high-availability zones in Telekom's high-performance data centers in Biere and Magdeburg. The Object Storage Service, which is compatible with the S3 object storage service from AWS, is used for the back-up. The required cloud resources can be optimally controlled with Auto Scaling and the Elastic Load Balancer.

One special feature: For licensing reasons, the Microsoft SQL Server database servers must run on dedicated hardware, which can be easily implemented with the Open Telekom Cloud's bare metal server.

The Customer Benefits

Companies violating the GDPR face fines of up to 20 million euros or 4 percent of the company's turnover. In addition, there is a loss of image and trust on the part of customers and employees. Randstad no longer has to worry about these issues. Another advantage: Thanks to the Open Telekom Cloud, the HR service provider meets the needs of its customers, for whom data protection and data security play an important role. It is now standard in tenders for them to ask where, by whom, and with which IT systems personal data is stored and processed.

Randstad also believes it is well positioned for the future. The infrastructure of the Open Telekom Cloud is based on OpenStack and can be flexibly developed further. It makes it possible to easily integrate micro services or container technologies. With container services, cloud resources can be better coordinated and scaled more quickly, for example. In addition, Windows licenses can be reduced or replaced by Linux licenses, which noticeably reduces costs.

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