

**CUSTOMER:**  
AddThis  
www.addthis.com

**IN COLLABORATION WITH:**  
HP

**INDUSTRY**

- Internet technology
- Social media & web analytics

**CHALLENGES**

- Rapid growth and rising demand for instant data analysis
- Increasing data processing needs for real-time analytics
- Provisioning for spikes in data around major events
- Maximizing price/performance within a limited footprint

**SOLUTION**

- HP SL335 servers featuring AMD Opteron™ 4100 Series processors
- Server platform based on six-core AMD Opteron™ processors topped AddThis benchmarks

**RESULTS**

- Serving 14 million web domains and 1.3 billion unique users each month\*
- Tracked record-breaking social media sharing during 2012 Olympics\*
- Proven reliability and scalability led to additional server purchases

**AMD TECHNOLOGY AT A GLANCE**

- AMD Opteron™ 4100 Series processors

*"AMD processors, for our benchmarks, provided the best performance for the density that we were going to be able to install. We empirically measured how they performed and chose the one that performed best."*

**Stewart Allen**  
Chief Technology Officer, AddThis

## AMD-powered HP servers help AddThis deliver real-time analytics in the social media landscape

### Sharing content and adding value

AddThis operates the world's largest social infrastructure and data platform. Its sharing tools are used by over 14 million web domains and reach 1.3 billion users each month. The orange "plus sign" icon that appears next to a majority of online content connects companies to customers through today's most relevant social media platforms.

As Chief Technology Officer Stewart Allen explains, "The products that we offer to publishers are a suite of tools around audience and user engagement, allowing them to augment and extend invitations to come to their websites and other online properties." In this capacity, they work with more than 500 major brands worldwide. Home Depot, Interactive One, CBS and Starbucks all leverage the curatorial power of AddThis to better meet their customers' needs and interests.

In the process of promoting content with such a broad reach, AddThis receives massive quantities of data that they analyze for real-time insights about users, helping provide a deeper understanding of their behaviors. This deep well of proprietary, aggregated data enables AddThis to offer clients other valuable services.

"We offer audience building for advertisers who want to reach specific audiences with specific intent. Brands can provide a more relevant, tailored experience to people as they visit a site by presenting the right content to the right people. The more companies realize they can do this, the more they want to do it," says Allen.

Having such a broad reach, AddThis must constantly be prepared not only to handle an enormous amount of data on a daily basis, but also to handle spikes in data that result from increases in web sharing that inevitably follow major news and worldwide events. AddThis selected AMD to help ramp up their data centers for increased real-time data processing needs driven by some of 2012's most discussed events, such as the 2012 Olympic Games.

### Building a small company on big data

Having digested information available in real time allows AddThis to deliver to peoples' desires and needs immediately, rather than post-processing it days or weeks later.

"This is a trend that's been happening for the last few years and it coincides with people's interest in big data. They're realizing that there is a trove of data available and that they can begin to activate it in real time," says Allen. "We have a vast reach and

huge amount of data that we can use to help our customers. If you're working with a smaller set of data, then you can't really draw deep insights. That level of reach is really important for data activation."

To tame the ever-expanding dataset for a rapidly growing client list, and stay within a limited datacenter footprint, AddThis had to establish a technology infrastructure that was tuned to their very particular needs.

1.8M

+ Share

### A platform optimized to the core

AddThis started developing real-time analytics back in 2006. "That was completely unique at the time. We were actually faced with a problem where we were a very small company on limited budgets and we couldn't go out and spend a ton of money on infrastructure to do what we wanted to do, and so we had to innovate," says Allen.

AddThis engineers spent a number of years building a hard-to-replicate software infrastructure around real-time analysis of big data sets. Essentially, they designed their own platform before these technologies existed—adjusting for performance at every level in their stack, down to the hardware layer.

"We care deeply about performance. We optimize our datacenter infrastructure for the fastest possible delivery of content and service time for requests," says Allen. "We tend to benchmark and optimize maniacally. When you're a relatively small company like us you want to be as optimal as possible in the way you utilize your resources and deploy them."

While AddThis might be a comparatively small company in the physical world, they've been able to punch well above their weight class in the digital world. "We are many times the size of our closest competitors, measured by footprint on the Web. And that is a testament to the quality and utility of the technology and the products," says Allen.

AMD

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## Outstanding price/performance; proven dependability

Explosive growth and increasing general demand for hardware processing put AddThis in the market for a new generation of servers. Allen and his team evaluated potential server configurations through in-house benchmarking.

"We try to crush these boxes and see what we can do with them—see how much we can squeeze out of them. During that process, HP provided us with AMD-based servers that won in terms of price/performance. Based on our benchmarks and footprint, we decided that we were going to be able to get way more processing power for our dollar out of these boxes," says Allen.

"AMD processors, for our benchmarks, provided the best performance for the density that we were going to be able to install. We empirically measured how they performed and chose the one that performed best."

In addition to delivering exceptional performance, six-core AMD Opteron™ 4100 Series processors have proven to be reliable. "We're currently running close to 1,000 servers with AMD processors and we like what we have. In three years, and however many boxes, we've never had a single problem with a single processor in any of the boxes. They've all performed very well."

AddThis processes up to 300TB of data per day and approximately 100 billion US page views per month—which effectively enables them to see 70% of the Web's behavior in real-time. That kind of rigorous information churn creates a great deal of stress in the data processing department.

"We have a tendency to run our products 100% loaded almost 100% of the time. When a box is installed and racked and running, we tend to beat up on it pretty hard. We're good at failing things and we've never had a failure of the AMD products. And they've always performed very well for us," says Allen.

## Breaking records at the Summer Olympics

Heading into the summer of 2012, AddThis foresaw a need for greater analytics capabilities. "Around the Olympics, we anticipated doing a lot more reporting about what was happening in real-time, which meant more jobs doing data processing. We factor all that into our capacity upgrading plans," says Allen.

AddThis purchased additional AMD-based servers from HP to handle their projected volume increase. "We were essentially live-blogging stats about the Olympics and their social impact. We worked with brands to help them understand how their Olympics ad campaigns fared on the social web and how they stacked up in the games."

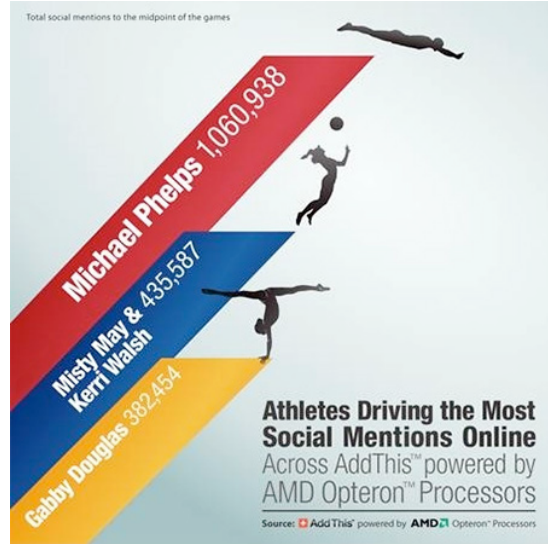
With an estimated 4.95 million shares, the 2012 Olympic opening ceremonies became the biggest social sharing activity on record for a sports or entertainment event, surpassing the previous record set during Super Bowl XLVI by 106%, based on data from AddThis.



To learn more about AMD Opteron visit: [www.amd.com/opteron](http://www.amd.com/opteron)

\* Data provided by AddThis.

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## Scalable platform for growing business

The Olympics won't be the last time AddThis needs to think about increasing capacity. The ability to smoothly scale capabilities within their footprint was also a significant benefit to the platform pairing of HP and AMD. "I live and breathe scalability. It's super important. In the hardware platform that we select, we care about everything from how it performs, to how it's installed, to how it's maintained," says Allen.

"We really like the HP servers that we installed because of the footprint and the way that we can add capacity. It's fairly high density. It's very easy to service, and in these specific systems we can actually upgrade processors and RAM if we need to, within our power budgets."

"AMD performs very well for the platform that we're using right now. We love the platform, which is why we bought more of it."

**"We've had very good experiences with AMD at a level where I would say its notable compared to other companies. Very good responsiveness whenever we've had questions."**

**Stewart Allen**  
Chief Technology Officer, AddThis

