



SUCCESS STORY  
Service Provider

**RSAWEB**

#### RSAWEB | PROBLEM SOLVED

NetApp® SolidFire® eliminated RSAWEB's noisy-neighbor issues and increased its cloud customers' response times and the overall performance of their business workloads by 4 to 5 times.

# RSAWEB Guarantees Faster Performance to Help Enterprise Cloud Customers Succeed Online

According to Cisco Global Cloud Index (2015-2020), cloud data center traffic in the Middle East and Africa is expected to grow 440% by 2020, making it the fastest cloud computing uptake in the world. This adoption is driving demand for better storage performance and infrastructure responsiveness. To increase customer confidence in its cloud services and drive growth, RSAWEB Enterprise Cloud needed to deliver fast, predictable performance.

Increase guaranteed cloud platform performance by up to

**5x**

Reduce time for customers to change tiers from

**2 hours ▶  
15 seconds**

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**NetApp®**

“Our mission is to help companies in Africa succeed online. Choosing SolidFire was a no-brainer. It has fundamentally changed the conversation with our customers and lowered the barriers for companies that want to engage with us. No matter the workload, our customers immediately have the utmost confidence that they’re going to get a reliable, flexible, and cost-effective service.”

Mark Slingsby  
CTO, RSAWEB

## DEFINING THE SOUTH AFRICAN HOSTING INDUSTRY

Founded in 2001, RSAWEB is a hosting and connectivity provider that delivers high-quality fibre, cloud, hosting, ADSL, dedicated servers, and domains in South Africa. RSAWEB has grown rapidly, investing in data center infrastructure in Johannesburg and Cape Town, with points of presence internationally. With a focus on customer service, in-depth technical understanding, and an unwavering commitment to continuously improving its products and services, RSAWEB has forged strong partnerships with some of South Africa’s leading brands across a wide range of industry sectors. In 2009, it co-established The RAMP Foundation, a nonprofit entity focused on inspiring, educating, and equipping entrepreneurs in South Africa.

Thanks to SolidFire, in 2015 RSAWEB was the first to deliver cloud hosting and connectivity

solutions in Africa with guaranteed storage performance. Through RSAWEB’s Enterprise Cloud, customers have access to a team of cloud experts for assistance without maintenance or capital costs. And, with its CloudConnect service, the company can securely connect its customers to the cloud by using their existing networks.

## ENSURING ROBUST AND RELIABLE SERVICES

As cloud computing matures, organizations are placing more workloads in the cloud. Looking beyond backups and small-server workloads, customers entrusted RSAWEB to host their resource-intensive, business-critical applications such as databases. However, although RSAWEB’s multitenant infrastructure offered features like thin provisioning, efficiencies, and competitive pricing, customers began to experience noisy-neighbor issues. Some of them moved their databases back from the cloud to on-premises environments.

Mark Slingsby, RSAWEB’s chief technology officer, explains: “Our previous platform served us well, but as the cloud business grew, it was difficult to establish where the performance ceiling was. We needed to address our customers’ requirements and ensure that our infrastructure could handle thousands of business-critical applications. We needed a next-generation architecture that delivers both speed and predictability.”

## GUARANTEED PERFORMANCE

After a thorough evaluation, RSAWEB implemented NetApp SolidFire. SolidFire partner and IaaS integrator ShapeBlue played an integral role in the deployment by enabling RSAWEB to test the solution and providing local technical, commercial, and operational support throughout the entire process.

With the SolidFire volume-level Quality of Service controls, RSAWEB can guarantee minimum, maximum, and burst performance

levels to thousands of applications from a shared infrastructure. The move to SolidFire immediately addressed the performance issues that RSAWEB previously faced. The first customers who migrated to SolidFire saw their performance increase 4 to 5 times.

RSAWEB also improved tier management, with SolidFire at platinum and gold tiers. “RSAWEB can now offer higher-tier services such as volume-specific snapshots,” says Slingsby. “And, if a customer wants to change tiers, we can move them in 15 seconds, compared to a couple of hours with our previous storage platform, at a cost of next to nothing. We don’t need to raise a ticket, migrate data, and get the right skills in place. SolidFire has significantly improved our agility.”

RSAWEB was also able to save rack space and power and cooling costs. Although the cost of power in South Africa has increased between 15% and 20% over the last 3 years,

RSAWEB was able to partially offset this increase, passing the savings along to its customers.

### **SEAMLESS GROWTH**

The SolidFire scale-out architecture enables RSAWEB to dynamically adjust storage resources to meet its customers’ ever-shifting, unpredictable business, and application demands. Infrastructure upgrades are now straightforward and nondisruptive.

“Upgrading our previous infrastructure required controller takeovers and significant engineering skill, which introduced a lot more risk,” explains Slingsby. “The SolidFire technology stack is really powerful. We can add, replace, and move nodes between clusters and data centers on demand with no impact to our customers’ operations. Our cloud infrastructure is enormously flexible, allowing us to grow incrementally as opposed to a big-bang approach.”

As a result, RSAWEB can empower its customers to accelerate their business growth:

- Moneyweb, a financial and business news publisher, can quickly respond to new market developments, providing readers with near real-time data, and can adjust website resources within minutes rather than hours to deliver the performance it needs when the website’s traffic is at its highest.
- Comair, an aviation and travel company, no longer experiences issues in supporting online sales when website traffic spikes to 40 or 50 times normal levels, delivering a far better experience to its customers.
- Maroela Media, a company that has built one of the largest online Afrikaaner communities in South Africa via its hosting platform, can scale effortlessly, driving a 23% growth in 3 months (close to 1 million page views)—without impacting the publishing process.

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“SolidFire allows our customers to transition to a next-generation data center that’s secure, blazing fast, and infinitely scalable so they can accelerate their businesses.”

Allan Boyle  
Chief Operating Officer, RSAWEB

## STRONG FOUNDATION FOR ENTERPRISE WORKLOADS

With SolidFire, RSAWEB can host any workloads in the cloud. “In addition to databases and Microsoft SQL and ERP platforms, our customers are increasingly interested in software-defined architectures that support DevOps, CI/CD, rapid deployment, and releases,” says Allan Boyle, chief operating officer at RSAWEB. “SolidFire is designed to automate the most time-consuming administrative tasks, which allows better code deployment while saving opex. The team at RSAWEB has been using this platform for our own DevOps

initiatives, enabling us to bring services to our customers faster.”

The SolidFire platform extends to workloads like disaster recovery and business continuity. Thanks to improved performance, supported by recent drops in the price of connectivity in the region, RSAWEB can offer cost-effective, real-time replication across its data centers and deliver even more value to its customers.

Finally, RSAWEB can seamlessly support customers who need to scale rapidly for one-off events. “With SolidFire, our customers

have the ability to burst for large financial audits or big online sales without lengthy migrations and reserving too many instances,” says Boyle. “SolidFire allows our customers to transition to a next-generation data center that’s secure, blazing fast, and infinitely scalable so they can accelerate their businesses.”

## SOLUTION COMPONENTS

### NETAPP PRODUCTS

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