

Betting on the Future: Aristocrat Turns to Splunk and Google Cloud to Power Its Digital Transformation

Online gaming company Aristocrat manages its complex cloud environment, security, operations and development with help from Google Cloud and Splunk.

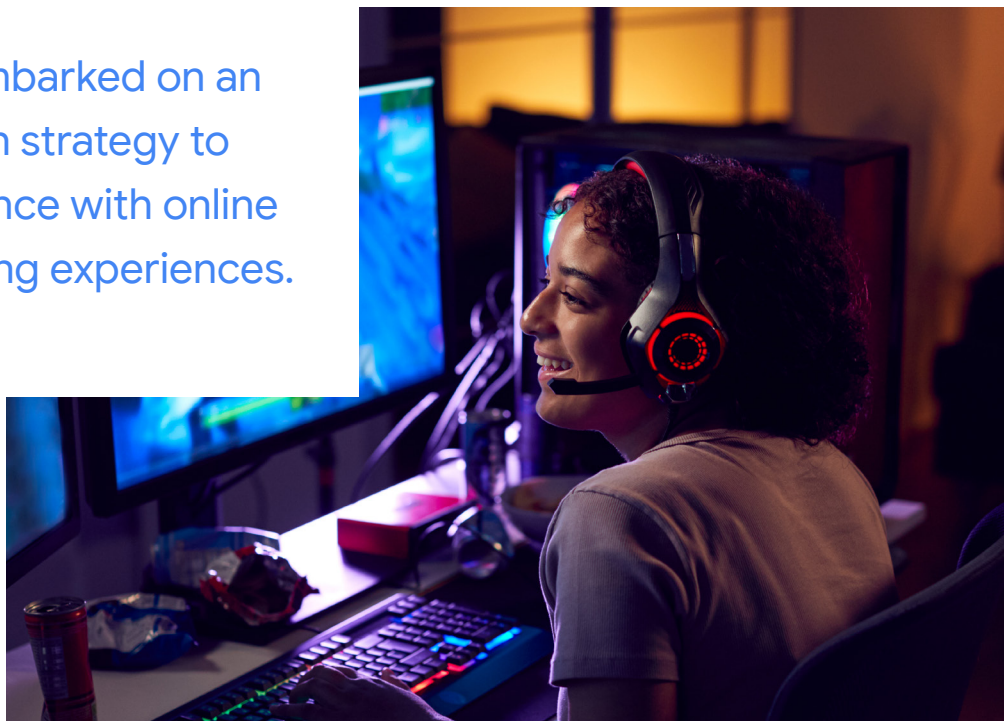
When you think about online gaming companies, a 68-year-old organization probably isn't what comes to mind. Yet Australia-based Aristocrat Leisure, founded in 1953 as a manufacturer of casino slot machines, has been riding the technology wave from mechanical machines to the connected machines and online gaming platforms it operates today.

Over the past several years, Aristocrat has embarked on an ambitious growth strategy to expand its presence with online and mobile gaming experiences. It now has marketing and development offices in South Africa, Russia, and the United States.

As part of that strategy, Aristocrat acquired several online-only gaming platforms, including Big Fish Games, the world's largest producer and distributor of free-to-play games; Plarium, which produces mobile and browser games such as role-playing adventure games (MMORPGs), strategy games, shooters, and casual games; and Product Madness, which offers digital social casino games. To manage its increasingly complex cloud environment, Aristocrat turned to Google Cloud as the foundation for its digital transformation and to Splunk to enhance visibility and ensure security.



Aristocrat has embarked on an ambitious growth strategy to expand its presence with online and mobile gaming experiences.



New gaming challenges in the 21st century

To stay ahead of the competition, Aristocrat knew it had to accelerate its digital transformation with a variety of cloud-connected and cloud-based products. To do so, the company had to overcome several significant challenges:



Scalability. Aristocrat's planned growth requires scalability and management. To move forward, the operations team needed to spend less time and effort and fewer resources on day-to-day management. Doing so had left little time to focus on troubleshooting and enhancing customer experience – not to mention researching and developing new products, functionalities, and capabilities across its multiple lines of business. The company's rapid scale-up threatened to degrade this experience even further.



Compliance. Aristocrat operates in a highly regulated industry across multiple jurisdictions around the globe. It needed to be able to handle any type of compliance issue, such as payment card industry (PCI) standards, as smoothly and efficiently as possible.



Security. Online gaming companies like Aristocrat make attractive targets for fraudulent activity and cyberthreats, so the company needed a robust capacity to identify incidents, such as failed logins, breaches, or issues within an antivirus log. These threats aren't only ongoing, they're also increasing in sophistication. Aristocrat needed to leverage greater visibility to continually improve the performance and security of its apps.

How Aristocrat benefits from its migration to Google Cloud

Aristocrat's global, 24-hour operations requires a highly secure, worldwide cloud platform capable of meeting the stringent regulatory requirements of multiple legal jurisdictions. This has become increasingly important in relation to the company's organic growth as well as with new acquisitions.

Google Cloud fits the bill by providing the company with the ability to:

Speed its digital transformation. Aristocrat is aggressively transforming its operations into a digital-native landscape centered around Google Cloud. This includes infrastructure build-outs for business units such as Big Fish, Plarium, and Product Madness to be able to permit thousands – if not tens of thousands – of players to enjoy their apps at the same time without experiencing lag. "For those business units, leveraging things like GCP is massive for us," says Francisco Artes, the company's Chief Information Security Officer. Aristocrat's gaming (i.e. "land-based") businesses, including casino operations and hospitality management software, are also a target for transformation via cloud migration and deployment. These developments have made Google Cloud one of Aristocrat's primary platforms in its multi-cloud environment.



Streamline its infrastructure. Migrating both its back-office IT stack as well as its consumer-facing and B2B2C production applications to Google Cloud as its primary platform makes it easier for Aristocrat to enforce security rules by monitoring and building reference architectures, policies, and procedures. Additionally, Google Cloud products regularly undergo independent verification of their security, privacy, and compliance controls, achieving certifications, attestations, and audit reports to demonstrate compliance.

Get simplified billing via Google Marketplace. The Google Cloud Marketplace was another reason for Aristocrat's growing presence on the platform. First, the Marketplace streamlines Aristocrat's deployment of third-party apps such as Splunk and Qualys. "We're spinning up and building things dynamically right onto Google Cloud," Francisco says. "It's absolutely fantastic." The Marketplace also provides greater granularity of billing for services with easy invoice coding. What's more, Splunk's integration with Google Cloud means the company's data never leaves Google Cloud to an instance of Splunk hosted elsewhere.

Gain identity and access management. Google Cloud offers strong and intuitive identity and access management tools. By leveraging Google Cloud's native access management, Aristocrat has been able to deprecate Bastion hosts and VPNs for back-end access. This has been an even greater benefit during the pandemic, as remote work grew dramatically and the company needed to adopt a zero-trust security posture. Francisco notes, "This has been a fundamental game changer for us."



As Aristocrat continues to grow, Splunk remains central to ensuring the performance and security.



Obtain managed cloud services. Last but not least, Aristocrat doesn't have to worry about upgrading and updating software as new versions become available, since Google Cloud takes care of that for them. This leaves the company with more time to devote to strategic initiatives and user experience improvements.

How Splunk improves Aristocrat's security posture and performance monitoring

Aristocrat has relied on Splunk for many years, and as the organization proceeded along its cloud journey, it deployed its own Splunk instance on Google Cloud in 2020. As Aristocrat continues to grow, Splunk remains central to ensuring the performance and security of Aristocrat's cloud environment; its integration with Google Cloud offers even more benefits. Here are just a few:

Splunk as SIEM. Splunk functions as Aristocrat's security information and event management (SIEM) system, leveraging Splunk's InfoSec app for continuous monitoring and security investigations. The InfoSec app also includes a number of advanced threat detection use cases so the Aristocrat team can have a comprehensive view of its security posture.

Forensics. Whenever the Aristocrat security team learns of a new vulnerability or exploit, they can review historical data to see if they've experienced a similar attack in the past. This helps the company determine if there had been an unidentified breach in the past or whether an attack had taken place. As Francisco points out, "It's fantastic to be able to go back and historically look at data."

Observability. Splunk gives Aristocrat the ability to pull in metrics to track browser-based applications such as its online gaming apps so they can monitor each step of every application. In addition, Splunk Observability provides Aristocrat with the ability to drill down to performance issue root causes. "Our developers are pretty excited by the ability to aggregate data together, especially disparate data," Francisco says, "and then present visualizations of that information for consumption."

Greater visibility into third-party systems. Aristocrat also uses Splunk to review data from third-party systems where the UI for that system may not be the most intuitive or the most versatile. With Splunk, Aristocrat has the ability to manipulate and present data in Splunk in a way that's not possible in the native applications. Splunk offers a single pane-of-glass with visibility across the entire hybrid multi-cloud environment, leaving no stone unturned.

Managing security rather than software

For a global company with ambitious growth plans like Aristocrat, the ability to scale securely is crucial. Moving to Google Cloud is making it easier for the company to focus on security, because software management is taken care of by Google and Splunk, and not Aristocrat's internal IT teams.

As Aristocrat has discovered, the Splunk and Google Cloud partnership helps organizations improve performance and security with the ability to ingest, normalize, and analyze data at scale. Their shared customers can also draw powerful insights using cutting-edge AI and ML capabilities to quickly automate actions based on the insights.

As organizations continue to adopt cloud-first initiatives, the powerful combination of Google Cloud's secure infrastructure and Splunk's Data-to-Everything platform allows innovators like Aristocrat to turn data into doing.

➔ Learn more about the ways in which Splunk and Google Cloud combine forces to make your organization more efficient and secure. [Get started today.](#)



Aristocrat has discovered that the Splunk and Google Cloud partnership helps organizations improve performance and security.