

How a U.S. Government News Agency Uncovered 75% Hosting Savings with DevPanel on AWS



Overview

A U.S. government news agency—delivering 1 to 2 billion monthly pageviews across dozens of Drupal sites—was facing ballooning hosting costs, operational roadblocks, and limited technical flexibility on its **Acquia**. With a mandate to modernize, reduce costs, and gain greater control, the agency turned to **DevPanel** to evaluate a migration to **AWS**.

The result?

- **75% reduction in hosting costs**
- **Improved site performance**
- **Full infrastructure access**
- **A modern dev platform with 24/7 support**

Challenge

The agency's main English-language news site alone drew over **11 million hits per day**, with 46 additional language sites serving millions more.

DevPanel Case Study

At the time, only **four sites were hosted on Acquia**, costing the agency **approximately \$1 million annually**. Hosting all 47 sites with Acquia would be financially unsustainable.

Key pain points included:

- **High recurring costs**
- **Limited control over infrastructure**
- **Slow, ticket-based support**
- **Platform bugs and dev friction**

The team recognized that **self-hosting on AWS** could solve many of these issues, but needed a platform to simplify the process—without losing the ease-of-use that Acquia offered.

Solution: DevPanel on AWS

The agency selected **DevPanel** as the control panel and automation platform for AWS.

DevPanel offered:

- **A point-and-click dashboard**, similar to Acquia
- **Browser-based development tools** (VS Code, PhpMyAdmin)
- **Full root access** to infrastructure and code
- **Integration-ready support** for AWS-native services
- **VPN access** for high-security compliance
- **24/7 hands-on DevOps support**

Crucially, DevPanel could be deployed **inside the agency's own AWS account**, ensuring full sovereignty over infrastructure and data.

Project Execution

In partnership with the agency's prime contractor, DevPanel undertook a phased evaluation project with four main objectives:

1. Time & Effort Estimation

- Manual and automated migrations were tested.
- On average, each site took **< 2 days** to migrate (including automated testing and go/no-go reviews).

2. Cost Comparison

- Estimated AWS hosting: ~\$127K/year.
- Adjusted for buffer and ops costs: **\$200K/year**.
- Compared to ~\$1M/year with Acquia, that's over **75% savings**.

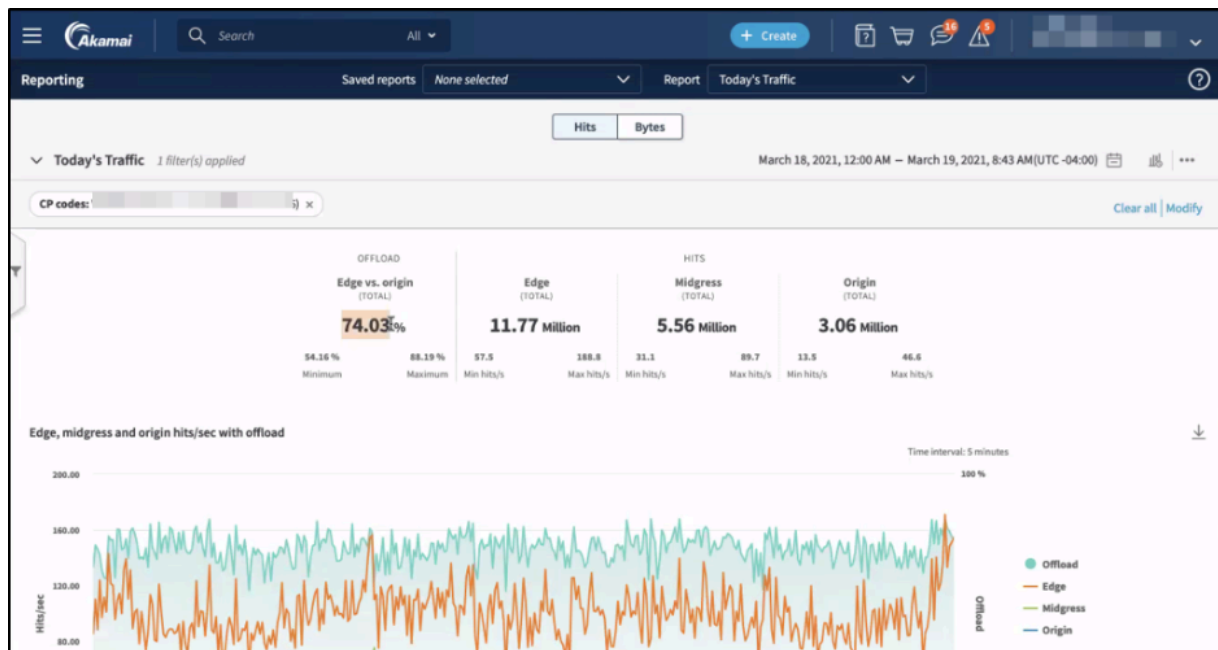
3. Performance Testing

- Sites on AWS loaded significantly **faster than Acquia** (even before cache optimization).
- Benchmarked with [WebPageTest.org](https://www.webpagetest.org).

4. Scalability Testing

- Load tested with over **1 million hits/minute**.
- AWS infrastructure scaled **automatically and gracefully** under peak load.

Exhibit 1 - High Traffic Site (> 11 Million Hits / Day)



Results

Metric	Acquia	DevPanel + AWS
Annual Hosting Cost	~ \$1,000,000	< \$200,000 (est.)
Dev Tools	Limited	VS Code, PhpMyAdmin
Root Access	No	Yes
Support	Slow, ticket-based	24/7 hands-on
Performance (TTV/Load)	Moderate	Significantly better
Infrastructure Scaling	Static	Auto-scaling w/ AWS

Exhibit 2 - Estimated Annual Costs on AWS (> 75% savings with DevPanel)

The screenshot displays the AWS Pricing Calculator interface. The top navigation bar includes the AWS logo, 'pricing calculator', and links for 'Feedback', 'English', and 'Contact Sales'. Below the navigation bar, the page title is 'My Estimate' with an 'Info' link. A row of buttons includes 'Add service', 'Add support', 'Add group', 'Clear estimate', 'Action', and 'Save and share'. The main content area shows a summary of costs: 'First 12 months total' at 127,004.30 USD, 'Total upfront' at 16,746.00 USD, and 'Total monthly' at 9,188.19 USD. Below this, a list of services is shown, including 'Amazon Virtual Private Cloud (VPC)', 'Data Transfer', 'Amazon Simple Storage Service (S3)', and 'Amazon CloudWatch'. Each service entry includes a description, region, and monthly cost. The footer contains links for 'Privacy', 'Site terms', 'Cookie preferences', and a copyright notice for 2021.

Service	Region	Configuration	Monthly Cost (USD)
Amazon Virtual Private Cloud (VPC)	US East (N. Virginia)		
Data Transfer		DT Inbound: Internet (0 TB per month), DT Outbound: Internet (12720 GB per month), DT Intra-Region: (240 TB per month)	6,047.51
Amazon Simple Storage Service (S3)	US East (N. Virginia)	S3 Standard storage (1000 GB per month)	25.50
		DT Inbound: Not selected (0 TB per month), DT Outbound: Not selected (0 TB per month)	0.00
Amazon CloudWatch	US East (N. Virginia)	Description: logs	

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Exhibit 3 - Site Performance (~1 sec faster on AWS with DevPanel)

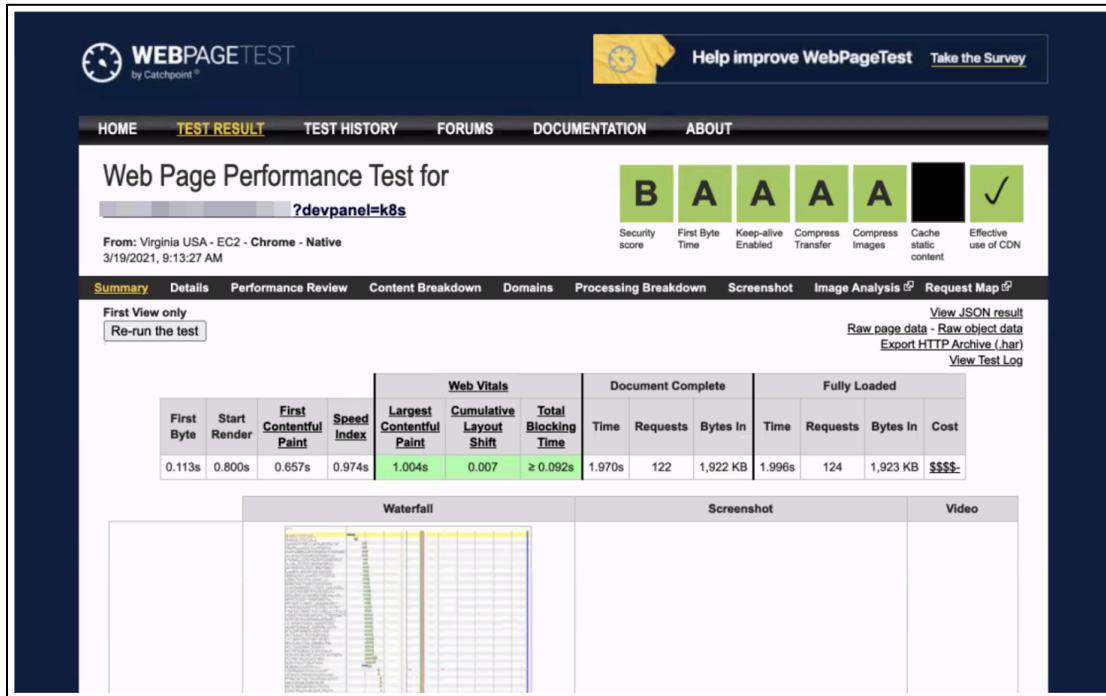
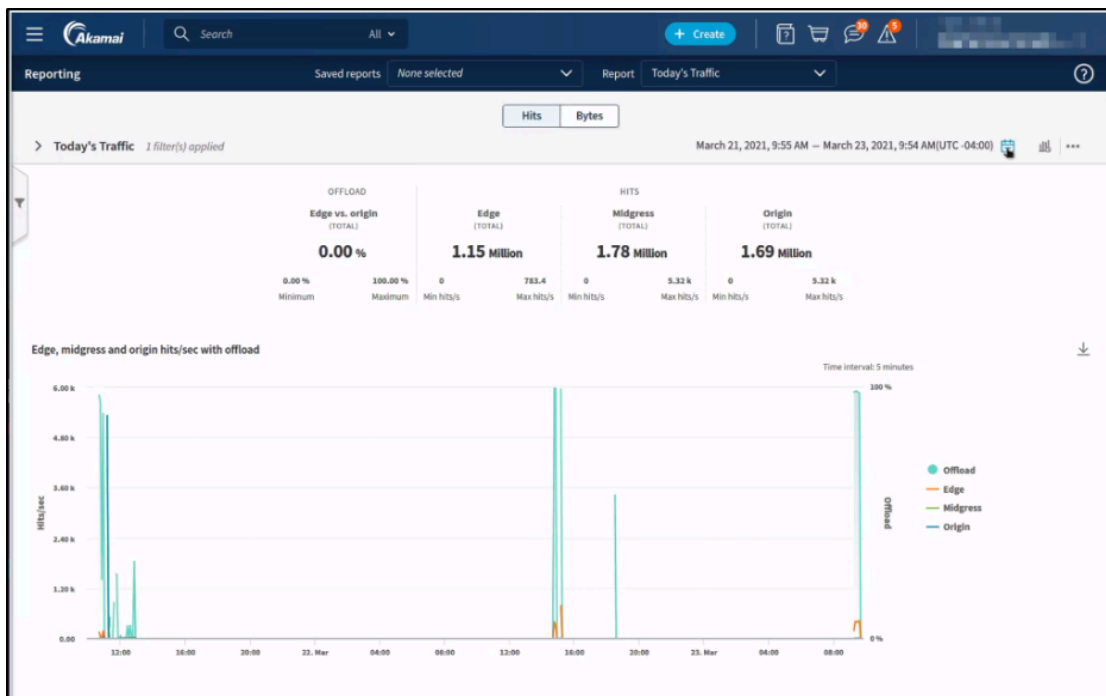
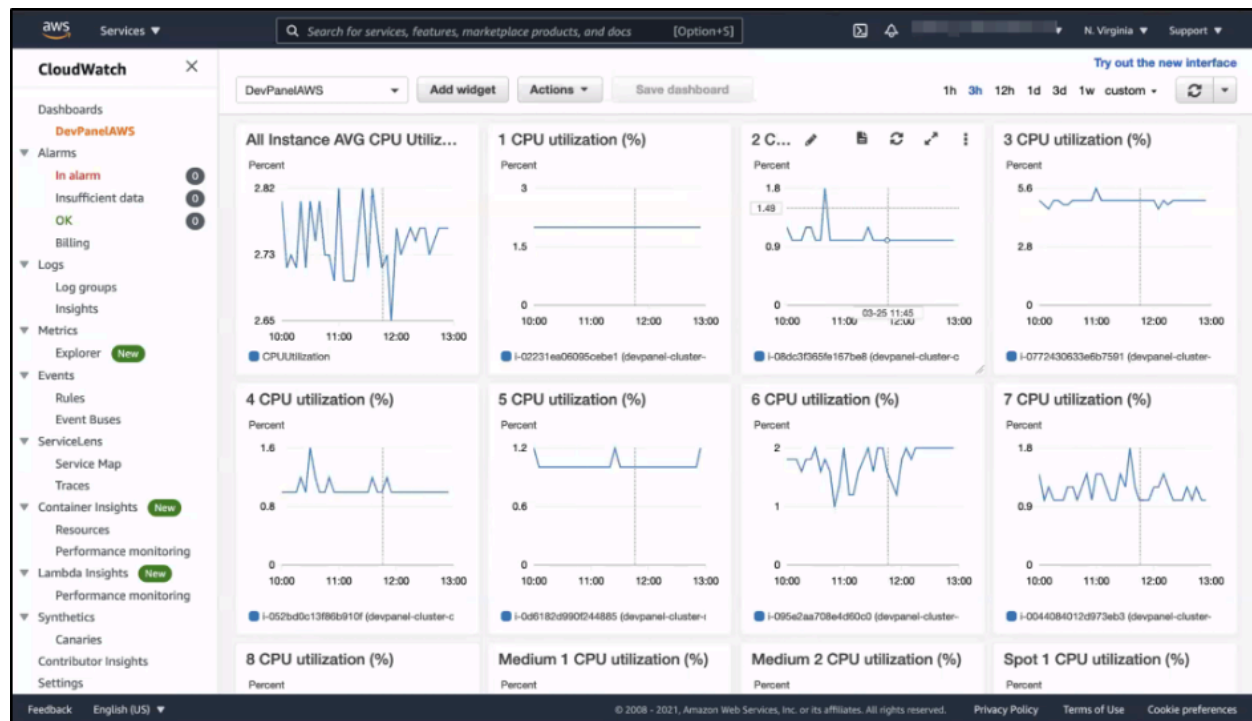


Exhibit 4 - Load Testing (able to handle sudden spikes of ~2 million hits/min)



DevPanel Case Study

Exhibit 5 - DevPanel cluster on AWS (able to scale instantly in response to spike in load)



Strategic Benefits

- **Financial:** Achieved long-term cost savings by moving away from vendor lock-in.
- **Operational:** Enabled developers to manage sites independently without delays.
- **Security:** Supported VPN access and agency-controlled deployments.
- **Compliance:** Aligned with federal cloud adoption policies and security standards.

Questions to Consider

- Are you paying high recurring hosting fees?
- Would 50–75% savings justify migration efforts?
- Could your teams benefit from faster support and full control?

About DevPanel

DevPanel is a secure, AWS-native development and hosting platform that enables agencies and organizations to build, deploy, and manage applications inside their own cloud accounts. From custom apps to high-security Drupal and WordPress sites, DevPanel puts power and flexibility in your hands—without needing to manage AWS manually.

To see DevPanel's capabilities firsthand, schedule a 15-minute demo.

Contact us through the website (<https://www.devpanel.com/>) or email: contact@devpanel.com.
