

# 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.

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## 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.

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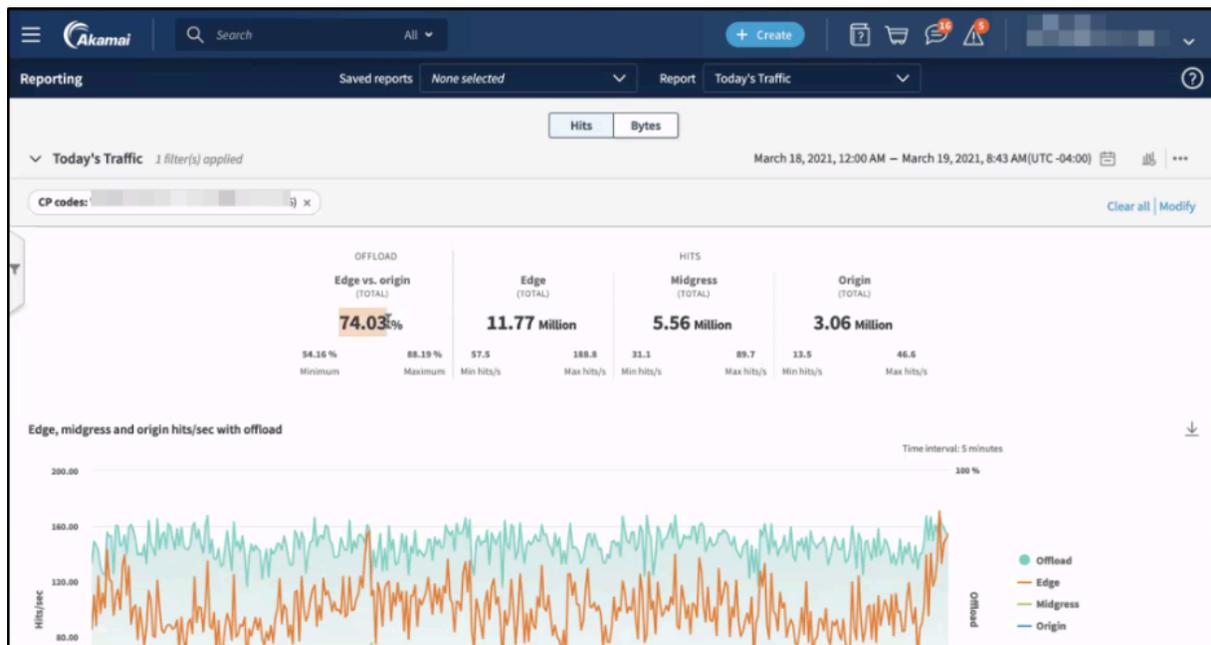
## DevPanel Case Study

### Project Execution

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

- 1. Time & Effort Estimation**
  - a. Manual and automated migrations were tested.
  - b. On average, each site took **< 2 days** to migrate (including automated testing and go/no-go reviews).
- 2. Cost Comparison**
  - a. Estimated AWS hosting: ~\$127K/year.
  - b. Adjusted for buffer and ops costs: **\$200K/year**.
  - c. Compared to ~\$1M/year with Acquia, that's over **75% savings**.
- 3. Performance Testing**
  - a. Sites on AWS loaded significantly **faster than Acquia** (even before cache optimization).
  - b. Benchmarked with [WebPageTest.org](https://www.webpagetest.org).
- 4. Scalability Testing**
  - a. Load tested with over **1 million hits/minute**.
  - b. AWS infrastructure scaled **automatically and gracefully** under peak load.

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



# DevPanel Case Study

## 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 shows the AWS Pricing Calculator interface. At the top, the browser tabs include 'Post Attendee - Zoom', 'Amazon Web Services Sign-In', and two instances of 'AWS Pricing Calculator'. The URL is 'https://calculator.aws/#/estimate'. The page header includes the AWS logo, 'pricing calculator', 'Feedback', 'English', and 'Contact Sales'. The main content area is titled 'My Estimate' and shows a summary of costs for the first 12 months total, total upfront, and total monthly. 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.

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 USD
Amazon Simple Storage Service (S3)	US East (N. Virginia)	S3 Standard storage (1000 GB per month)	25.50 USD
		DT Inbound: Not selected (0 TB per month), DT Outbound: Not selected (0 TB per month)	0.00 USD
Amazon CloudWatch	US East (N. Virginia)	Description: logs	

# DevPanel Case Study

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

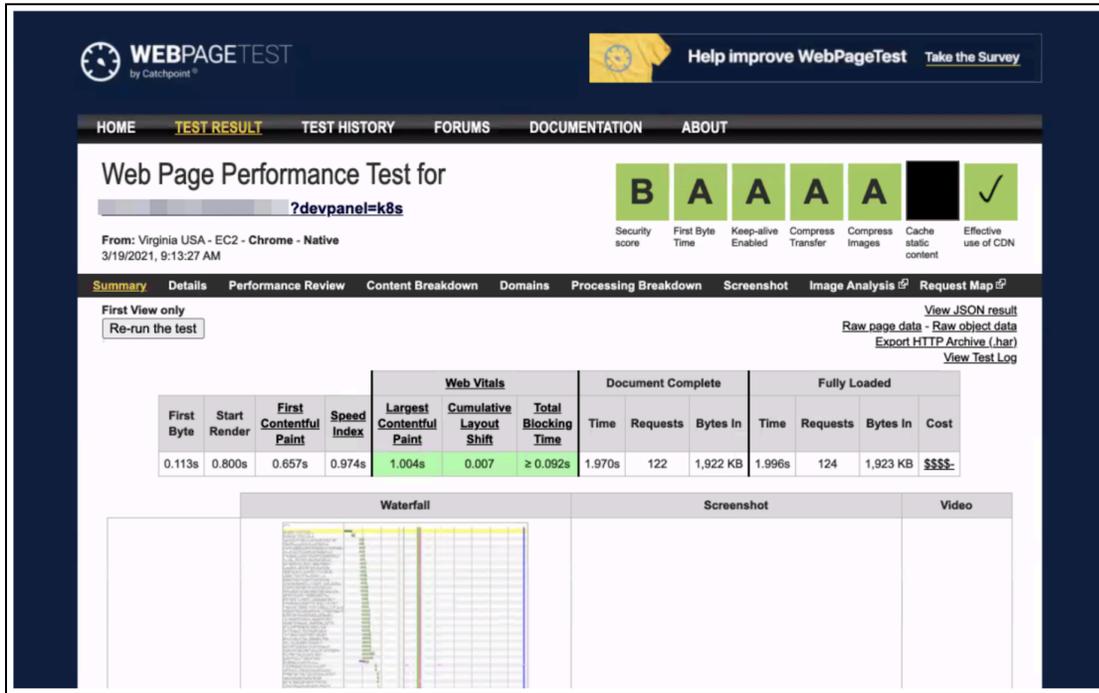
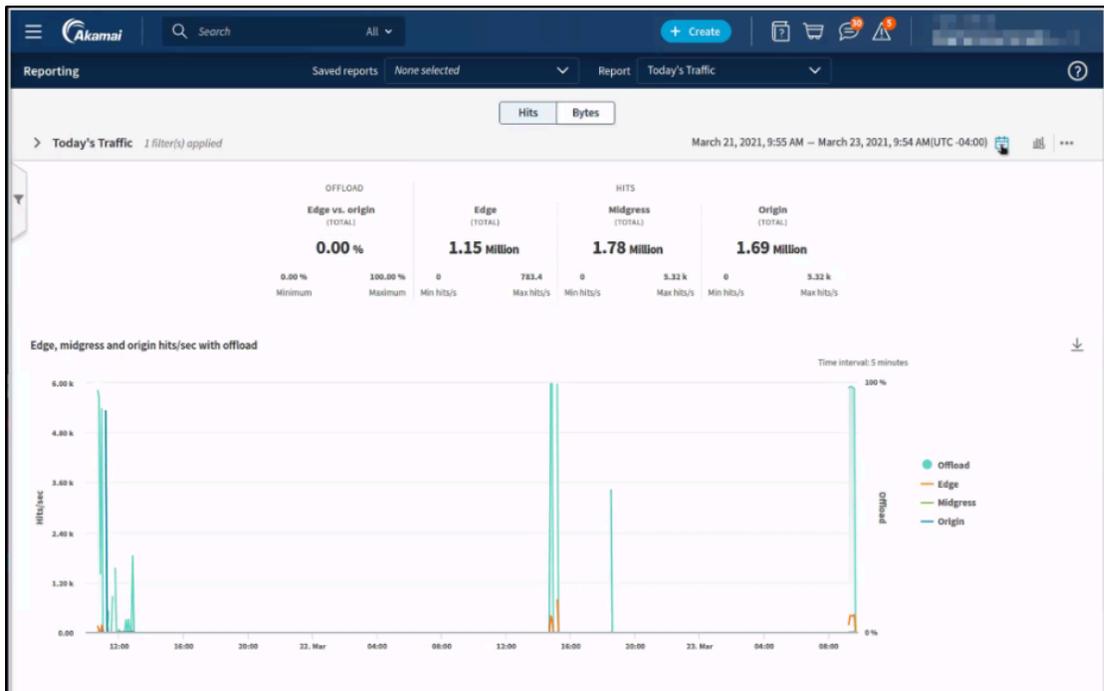
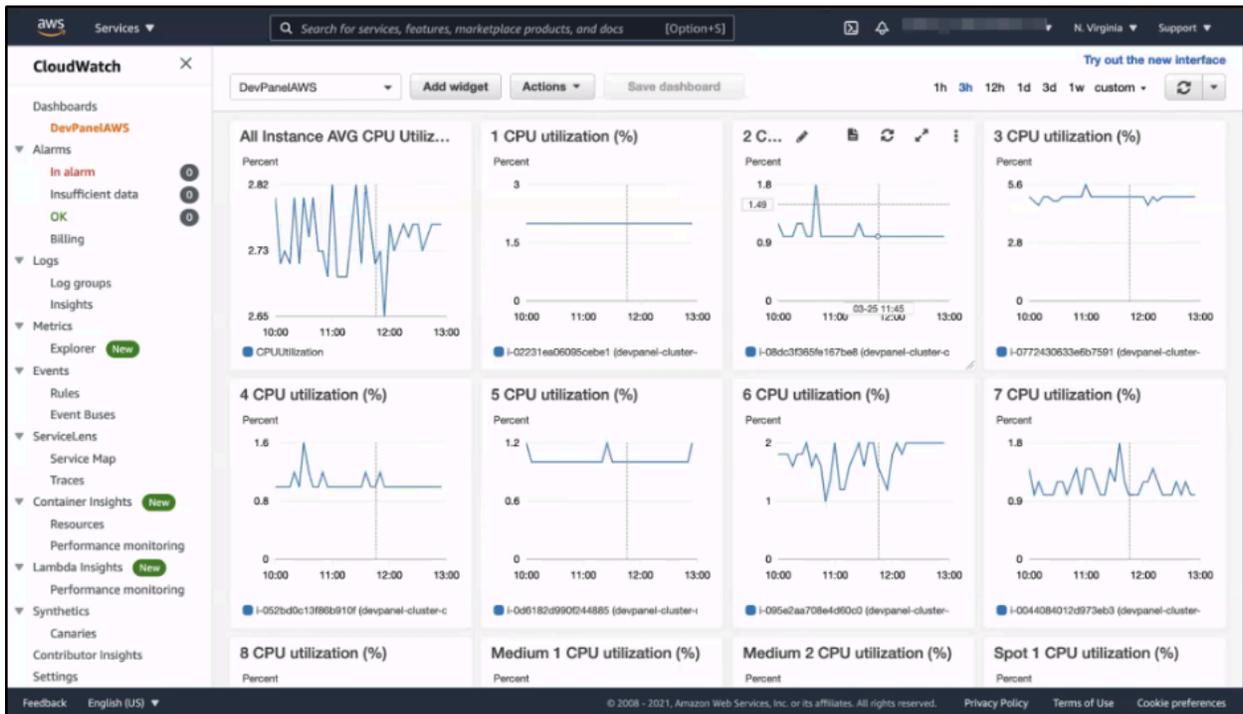


Exhibit 4 - Load Testing (able to handle sudden spikes of ~2 million hits/min)



## 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?

## DevPanel Case Study

### 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.

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**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](mailto:contact@devpanel.com).

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