

# Case Study

## Gulf Coast .NET User Group in Windows Azure

[www.gulfcoastdotnet.org](http://www.gulfcoastdotnet.org)



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*“By building and deploying Kentico solutions on the Windows Azure platform, Bit-Wizards’ clients will be afforded the type of scalability and extensibility that has previously been only available through expensive web farms.”*

**Vincent Mayfield,**  
CEO,  
Bit-Wizards

## Goals

The Gulf Coast .NET User Group web site is non-profit site dedicated to providing the Florida Panhandle development community with industry knowledge and news on .NET topics, programming concepts, and meeting information. The goal of this project was leverage Windows Azure’s unique hosting and content delivery model for the Gulf Coast .NET User Group site. Additionally, the database needed to be deployed to SQL Azure to take advantage of Microsoft’s robust and globally available infrastructure for databases.

## Challenges

Deploying a Kentico site into Windows Azure proposed several technical challenges. Kentico’s standard web site Visual Studio solution must first be converted to a web application. After conversion, several files/configurations had to be applied to accommodate Windows Azure file structure and functionality. The Gulf Coast .NET User Group site utilized Web Analytics and SmartSearch so a storage account in Windows Azure had to be created and the site configured to utilize it.

## Solutions

Bit-Wizards worked extensively with Kentico Support to develop and configure the site to work within Windows Azure. The first step of the process was to upgrade the site to latest version of Kentico. Bit-Wizards utilized the Kentico-provided upgrade packages to bring the site up to Kentico 5.5 R2. After upgrading, the site was converted to a web application using Martin Hejtmanek’s detailed blog on Converting a Kentico site to a Web Application.

Once the project was a web application, a Service Role was added. The role was configured for the appropriate Azure Instance to ensure the proper Azure resources would be allocated for the application. The Gulf Coast .NET User Group site utilized SmartSearch and Web Analytics, both of which require access to the local file system. A local storage account was added to the role to allow the application to properly create and modify files for those functions.

The database was migrated to SQL Azure using the SQL Azure Migration Wizard. The database was scripted and migrated to SQL Azure and all connections strings were updated to connect to the new location. The application was then tested locally while accessing the SQL Azure database to confirm connectivity and functionality.

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*“With the introduction of Windows Azure support Kentico is constantly updating their product to accommodate all forms of development and committed to being a global leader for content management systems.”*

**Bryan Soltis,**  
Senior Software Engineer,  
Bit-Wizards



After confirming all functionality, the Gulf Coast .NET User Group application was deployed to Windows Azure. The upload process for a Kentico application is slightly longer than simple web applications, due to the number of files within the site. Once the site was successfully deployed, all DNS records were updated for the site.

The entire development process took approximately 4 hours to complete. The amount of upgrades that are required could lengthen/shorten that process, depending on the site.

## Key criteria for selecting Kentico CMS

Deploying the Gulf Coast .NET User Group application to Windows Azure provided global accessibility, efficient management, and reduced overhead and costs for Bit-Wizards. Utilizing Kentico CMS in Windows Azure allowed Bit-Wizards to develop an extremely robust web application for the Gulf Coast .NET User Group using the Kentico CMS architecture. Kentico’s open and extensible content management system allowed Bit-Wizards to add dynamic content, custom web reporting, and up to date content through an intuitive and efficient administrative interface. The ability to deploy Kentico CMS into Azure enabled Bit-Wizards to take advantage of Microsoft’s new hosting architecture and systems.

