# VIRGIN MEDIA O2 SERVES OVER 30 MILLION USERS IN THE CLOUD WITH MARIADB SKYSQL

Virgin Media O2, one of Europe's largest telecommunications service providers, was the first to offer free Wi-Fi to the public at locales throughout the UK and Northern Ireland (such as at Sainsburys, McDonald's restaurants, and Manchester City games at the Etihad Stadium). Virgin Media O2 started out using MySQL on premises in 2010, but their rapid growth created challenges, which they resolved by moving to MariaDB SkySQL database-as-a-service.

## WHY VIRGIN MEDIA O2 MOVED TO THE CLOUD WITH SKYSQL

Performing the continuous updates, software patches and other maintenance in-house added risk to the O2 Wifi service. And even with several full-time DBAs plus contractors, the O2 team lacked full visibility into their database performance. Further, limited out-of-business-hours database support resulted in breached SLAs with their customers. To resolve these matters, Virgin Media O2 decided to migrate fully to the cloud with MariaDB's SkySQL database-as-a-service.

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> SkySQL does what it says on the tin. MariaDB is very flexible, very understanding, very agile. And they like to take on a problem. If you're comparing cloud databases, my advice would be to go with SkySQL, no question.
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> Paul Greaves, Head of Automation and Orchestration, Infrastructure Cloud Engineering and Delivery, O2 Enterprise and Wifi, Virgin Media UK Limited

## FASTER INNOVATION AND SUBSTANTIAL ROI

O2 was looking to remove the heavy burden of database administration and the associated hardware maintenance costs – in addition to gaining the level of database expertise and service they sorely needed. "Moving to a managed cloud database service ticked all the boxes," says Paul Greaves, Head of Automation and Orchestration, Infrastructure Cloud Engineering and Delivery, O2 Enterprise and Wifi, Virgin Media UK Limited: "SkySQL achieved it and smashed it. We don't need to worry about it. We could have got a service from Google MySQL, but we would have still had to set up and configure it."

SkySQL is configured by default for data protection, security and performance, and there's no additional cost for enterprise-grade high availability, failover, backups and other vital features, unlike with other cloud databases services.

"SkySQL opens up new opportunities for us to iterate faster and provide a better experience for our customers," Greaves explains. "We now have a 24x7 platform that's more efficient, faster and cheaper. Cost was the last thing we looked at, but we're happy to see the savings. Both OpEx and CapEx were massively reduced by moving everything we did from on-prem into SkySQL, and that savings will continue, on an ongoing basis. We can now always work within our budget and scale as we go."

## EXPERT SUPPORT AND INSIGHTS FROM THE SOURCE

For years, O2 had difficulty finding knowledgeable DBAs who could support their databases and fix any problems quickly. "As soon as we migrated, we got full support around the clock from MariaDB's own engineers and MariaDB-certified database administrators," Greaves says. "It's a weight off my shoulders. You get to speak to humans – I know the first name of a lot of the technical team there, so it's as though they're colleagues of mine."

With a SkySQL support plan and the complementary SkyDBA service, O2 was able to confidently migrate all of its mission-critical databases to the cloud, and can now rest easy knowing that expert support is ready and waiting, 24x7.

Of the migration process, Greaves says, "It was reassuring to have the experts on the other end of the phone, confirming that the reads were growing in SkySQL, the writes started going in SkySQL and there were no writes happening on prem, rather than us having to figure it all out."

## CLEAR VISIBILITY VIA MONITORING AND REPORTING

With SkySQL's built-in monitoring dashboard, Greaves says, "We instantly got visibility into what our platform was doing and how it was performing. As soon as we migrated, all of the failed connections we'd experienced previously disappeared, and every single connection stayed up consistently. Even better, we saw the connections. We could see the transactions; we could see the latency – which dropped from 7ms before to 1ms with SkySQL – in the monitoring dashboards that you get out of the box with SkySQL."

"Now we can make informed business decisions because we can easily see and understand what is happening," continues Greaves. "Within two hours of migrating to SkySQL, we began to see immediate improvements we could make within our applications to have them perform at their peak."

## WELL POSITIONED FOR CONTINUED GROWTH

Virgin Media O2 now serves more than 30 million users via SkySQL cluster databases running all transactions for O2's network, customer authentication, venue deployment and internal operations, including reporting and analytics. Greaves concludes, "My confidence level is at an all-time high now with SkySQL."

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