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Liquid Web's CEO Matt Hill has two server facilities, hosting more than a quarter of a million websites. Photo by Terri Shaver.

Author : [Christine Caswell](#)

Liquid Web: Where Websits Live

While still in high school, Matthew Hill started a business. Ten years later, Liquid Web, Inc. is a multimillion-dollar, international corporation.

"We are a Web hosting and data center," Hill, now Liquid Web's CEO, explained. "We essentially are the 'other side' of the Internet. We are where websites live."

Liquid Web currently has 3,000 servers on two local sites, which have multiple levels of "redundancy" or duplication to make sure that data or websites are not interrupted, even when a server malfunctions.

"Our clients probably wouldn't even notice," said Hill.

The company has support staff on-site 24 hours a day, has emergency generator backup systems, and implements extensive security measures to protect its equipment and the data that it holds.

"We host a quarter of a million websites between our two data centers," said Hill. "Our customer base is global. We're about 80 percent U.S. based. Even in the United States, our concentration is in California and New York. Michigan is our third largest customer. We'll probably be north of \$11 million in revenue this year, and we're almost doubling each year."

"We also deal with disaster recovery or providing an off-site data center for people who need security," he continued. "If you have all of your client records and all of your data on-site, and your building burns down, an organization disappears overnight."

Since Hill grew up in the area, he keeps the company local.

"Even though we have a global client base, we hire and operate locally," Hill noted. "We create jobs here, and we're expecting to expand and thrive, so we're independent of whatever is happening [economically] here."

"There are many benefits of being in Lansing for the business," added Travis Stolker, Liquid Web's director of marketing.

"From a data center standpoint, up time is everything, and there are many data centers in the wrong regions, like Florida, California, and there were a lot in New Orleans," Hill explained. "Michigan is free of natural disasters. The power infrastructure is robust, and it's cheap compared to national averages, and the climate is actually a good thing. Our cooling costs in the winter are lower than they would be in a region that had year-round summer. And the employer market is great. We have a lot of computer science and computer-related majors [at LCC and MSU] and not a lot of companies are hiring in this area."

Liquid Web currently has about 16 employees and expects to add more.

"A lot of our marketing is targeted to Lansing because of our aggressive hiring, so we need to have access and be available to the colleges so the students know we're a resource and employer here," noted Stoliker. "What I've found to be unique is that Liquid Web provides complete paid healthcare, vision care and dental care. There is nothing out of pocket for employees except for some co-pays. What's so exciting about Liquid Web is that it's growing so fast, and employees have a great opportunity to grow with it."

"Internet usage is continuing to grow, and the more consumer demand grows, the more our demand grows as well," added Hill. "People are doing more online and spending more time online. It's become more resource intensive with more advanced applications and larger downloads. Companies are making big investments in their Internet presence, and they're starting to outsource things that they would normally have inside their organization; such as, applications that would live on the desktop are beginning to live in a Web browser. We're the platform to support all of that activity."

"Having more things online benefits us because everything needs to have a Web server," noted Stoliker.

Which is where Liquid Web's attention to security comes in.

"The Internet is especially lawless since it's global, so it really takes a good management service provider to have the right security mindset," said Hill. "We do security and monitoring services for most of our servers. That's a big task in itself. That's one way our operation differs from a lot of co-location operations where you just put a server in a building and have to respond to it yourself. We're on-site and we can do it all immediately."

"If a website is down for one or two hours, that's bad for business," said Stoliker. "It would be like closing your business for two hours. A company could lose possibly hundreds of thousands of dollars in revenue. That's why people depend on Liquid Web for support."

"If they go to a website that's down, a lot of people don't come back because they think it's gone, so Web businesses really need to be up all the time," added Hill. "We're a premium player, which is a doubled-edged sword, because we have both a nearly unlimited potential client base and unlimited competition. But we like competition. It keeps us fresh."

Liquid Web's corporate culture, with its employee lounge providing both a comfortable meeting space and recreational opportunities, is conducive to its youthful staff, who, Hill noted, are also committed to the success of the business.

"When something really bad happens at 5 a.m., there are people coming in on their day off, or they'll log in [from home] if we get an influx of e-mail tickets or phone calls," Hill stated. "It's a commitment to customer service. The customer comes first, no matter what time of day, no matter what it takes."

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