

Pixit Media puts a Halo on 4K with ERA



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Background

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Recent Halo post production credits include the feature films *The Danish Girl*, *Bear Hunt* and *Nocturnal Animals*. Dramas include *Doctor Thorne* and *The Missing 1 and 2*; documentaries

including *Great Barrier Reef* with David Attenborough for the BBC Natural History Unit, *Forces of Nature*, and the television comedies *Murder in Successville*, *Upstart Crow* and *Toast of London*.

Although Halo soon recognised the need to enhance its 4K capabilities to meet increasing demand, it also recognised that the storage system in its existing workflow infrastructure could not cope with 4K production requirements.

Halo therefore turned to leading IT-solution specialists ERA to design and implement a 4K solution who in turn came to Pixit Media with a view to designing a new system for Halo with Pixit Media's PixStor storage system at its heart.

CASE STUDY: Halo



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Daniel Napier
Technical Director- Halo Post



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Implementation

ERA and Halo quickly identified that the PixStor software-defined storage system offered precisely the right capacity, scalability, and functionality to ensure seamless playback on multiple 4K workstations and enable increasingly complex VFX workflows.

Because PixStor has no reliance on proprietary hardware, Halo content creators can now manage vast amounts of data by combining – on one platform – SAN-based performance with central NAS manageability. Netapp’s E Series storage arrays were chosen to deliver the raw power to drive the demanding workflow targets. Having a world class global vendor supporting the hardware whilst meeting tough budgetary constraints gives total continuity to the customer.

Daniel Napier, technical director at Halo, said, “It quickly became clear that PixStor had exactly what we needed, not least to meet our requirement to avoid being chained to any proprietary technologies or expensive, bespoke infrastructures. PixStor’s performance capabilities are very high, but also very cost effective. What’s more, as we, and the need for 4K production, continues to grow, PixStor can grow right along with us.”

Benefits

PixStor benefits organisations like Halo because it’s extremely sophisticated, high-end software runs on best-of-breed OTS components. This couples significant capital cost savings with the additional savings of easy maintenance, irrespective of the demands of file-based, multi-resolution media work.

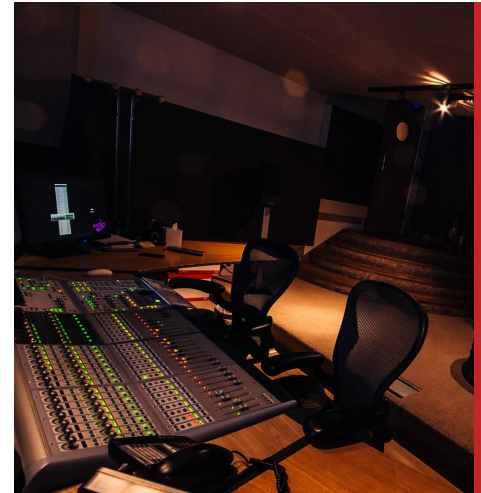
Today

PixStor now supports six real-time 4K clients for halo, including Nucoda grading systems, Flame VFX and Avid Media Composers. There are also two 4K conform and I/O stations. A separate workflow supports an additional 20 2D/3D clients and multiple render nodes within the same logical storage space. The network fabric was architected using lossless, non-blocking Mellanox IP cores of

40GB or 10GB dependent on client connections. Prioritisation across the network guarantees performance levels for specific users, while ensuring smooth, seamless data delivery to all network clients.

The Result

Halo’s state-of-the-art 4K finishing facility is now one of the finest in the world, combining world-class talent with a comprehensive range of award-winning grading, sound, and editing services underpinned by a PixStor storage solution provides the benefits of economy while improving on – not compromising – on availability, reliability, and return on investment.



SUMMARY

“ERA’s insights in knowing that PixStor, and support from Pixit Media if required, would not only support what we wanted to do, but enable us to do what we need to do now and in the future, were invaluable,” said Napier. “The addition of a robust, reliable and scalable central storage resource takes our already high level of service to an altogether loftier plane. It has already easily enabled us to take on more and more high-end project, 4K or otherwise, for which we may have been previously underequipped.”

For more information on PixStor and all Pixit Media Solutions:

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