

## CASE STUDY

# CDW HELPS AWARD-WINNING DIGITAL AGENCY, LITTLE DOT STUDIOS, ADOPT FASTER AND MORE FLEXIBLE VIDEO EDITING AND STORAGE PLATFORM

### OVERVIEW

- Little Dot Studios used a mix of third-party tools to create, edit and store video files.
- The rapidly growing digital content provider wanted to deploy a single software-defined solution with seamless cloud integration.
- CDW worked with partners paxitmedia, NetApp, and Dell to develop a new platform with the highest levels of flexibility and scalability.
- The technology adoption means Little Dot Studios' editors can work more efficiently to produce broadcast-quality material.

### ABOUT LITTLE DOT STUDIOS

- Little Dot Studios is an award-winning digital content agency and media network, initially based in London but now with offices globally.
- It engages, grows and monetizes digital audiences on social platforms and connected devices with data-driven content.
- The company believes in creating meaningful and long-term connections with audiences for broadcasters, studios, rights holders and brands

### CHALLENGE

Little Dot Studios has been one of the stand-out successes of the digital era. Founded in 2013, this award-winning digital content agency spotted an opportunity to create meaningful connections between the traditional TV world and new online audiences. Now, with more than 500 employees based in across the UK, US, Germany and APAC, it is one of the leading broadcast-quality content providers and works with some of the most famous brands in the world.

However, this growth had started to put pressure on existing IT infrastructure. Historically, Little Dot Studios used a mix of third-party tools to create, edit and store video files. But as more content was produced and new users entered the system, it became clear that the existing platform lacked the performance and features to support the business. Little Dot Studios, therefore, came to the market with a need for a new global video editing solution and underlying hardware with exceptional usability and scalability to meet its operational requirements.

"Our organisation has grown exponentially, and we work with huge brands," says Jak Wakefield, Senior Content Delivery and Syndication Manager at Little Dot Studios. "We needed a video editing and storage system that could complement our growth and support our ability to make more content."

Little Dot Studios had a long-standing relationship with CDW and, following early-stage discussions, this successful partnership was initiated once again. "We worked through the request for proposals and quickly understood the customer's technical needs," says Anthony Mensah, Senior Account Manager at CDW.

"It required a software-defined solution that could be implemented on-premise, in-cloud or in a hybrid cloud environment, and which could offer guaranteed performance to video edit workloads. The solution also required high levels of automation and an ability to implement seamless cloud archiving, while improving on current stability issues. Finally, the solution had to be highly scalable to meet Little Dot Studios' future expansion plans. The challenge, then, was to identify the right partners and technologies to ensure a positive outcome."



## SOLUTION

CDW worked with multiple vendors from its ecosystem of partners to deliver the project from end to end. After a period of agnostic technology assessment, pixonmedia was chosen for the central global file system, while NetApp would supply the underlying storage system and Dell the supporting computer hardware. An extensive consultation engagement was performed, with technical teams from CDW and Little Dot Studios working closely to ensure that all technical and business requirements had been articulated and that the proposed solution provided a suitable fit.

The technology stack included:

- pixonmedia's ngenea on-demand data management solution, designed to harmonise globally distributed workflows, allowing Little Dot Studios access to its data whenever and wherever it was needed. It also included pixstor, a complete software defined storage solution purpose-built for media requirements, offering guaranteed performance from disk to desktop which could manage petabytes of data.
- The pixonmedia solution was built upon the high core density compute capability of Dell's PowerEdge 14G server line, which delivers exceptional performance to application workloads, allowing a seamless user experience as well as in-built management capabilities.

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Jak Wakefield

Senior Content Delivery and Syndication Manager at Little Dot Studios

- These compute nodes were integrated alongside NetApp's E-Series storage array, with high bandwidth leading into microsecond response times. NetApp E-Series utilises the built-in SANtricity software with enterprise availability features that provide excellent data protection and hardware resilience, all managed from a single interface.

Following a successful tender process, CDW performed further detailed integration work at The pixonmedia Lab in London, to ensure that pixonmedia's solution and the NetApp/Dell architecture underneath would work seamlessly together. While this work was conducted, Little Dot Studios was kept fully informed of the design and development process, with clear milestones and timelines provided for the integration programme.

“We had a list of deliverables from the number of concurrent users that could use the system, through to automation requirements for certain workflows,” says Jak Wakefield from Little Dot Studios. “Through weekly catch-ups with CDW and the technology partners, we were confident that the success criteria were being achieved. It was a transparent process, and we were always kept in the loop.”

It wasn't just the technology that required careful consideration; the data protection and legal frameworks surrounding the project were also stringent. “The technology solution would be used to interface with Little Dot Studios' customers and end-users, so elements like data protection had to be evaluated in quite some depth,” says Anthony Mensah at CDW. “The solution would also be used to support Little Dot Studios' main revenue streams, so it had to be resilient. The whole process was the combination of technology identification, acquisition and development, combined with end-to-end project management. Only a company with the knowledge and scale of CDW would have been suitable.”



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## OUTCOME

Little Dot Studios has now fully adopted the video editing and paxitmedia storage and data orchestration solution and it is being used by a growing number of creatives across its global business. Operationally, it has delivered some key advantages. There is more process automation, which supports more efficient working practices. The cloud is now used seamlessly for archiving content outputs, with improved search functions allowing quicker access to video and images on demand. The solution also supports new workloads in higher resolution, while guaranteeing speed and performance to Little Dot Studios' editors, who often work on time-sensitive projects.

Crucially, the solution has been designed to be expanded quickly, supporting Little Dot Studios' continued growth. All hardware and software can be scaled-out, providing the opportunity to support even higher-resolution digital workloads, should the need arise. Also, essential data criteria such as current storage usage and other granular information can be viewed by Little Dot Studios' IT team through a single pane of glass, providing better onward visibility of future needs.

"The solution is easy to use," says Jak Wakefield at Little Dot Studios.

"We can really dig into the data to see what is going on. How storage is being allocated and used is very interesting for us. It gives us excellent visibility."

Now, CDW and Little Dot Studios are exploring other IT infrastructure

opportunities. These conversations could result in the video editing and storage solution being adopted by other media and content companies within its parent organization.

"We have been focussed on supporting the platform through a three-year services arrangement, and things have been running smoothly," says Anthony Mensah at CDW.

"But as Little Dot Studios continues to grow, there could be additional technology opportunities. Initially, these discussions might be around expanding the storage on the system or deploying new functionality."

Jak Wakefield of Little Dot Studios adds: "We always want to be at the forefront of digital content services and we need the technologies to support those ambitions."



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To learn more about how CDW could help you adopt faster and more flexible workflows please contact your Account Manager or email [customersuccess@uk.cdw.com](mailto:customersuccess@uk.cdw.com)

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