About Customer

Based in the Northern Rivers region of New South Wales, Cumulus Visual Effects (VFX) is one of Australia's premier boutique VFX providers. The company is a trusted collaboration partner for larger VFX studios, nationally and internationally.
www.cumulusvfx.com.au

Geo

Asia Pacific

Industry

Media and Entertainment

Solution Area

Accelerate Core Applications

Products in Use

FlashBlade®
RapidFile Toolkit

Setting New Standards for Planet-Friendly VFX

Cumulus VFX has grown rapidly since its founding in 2010, gaining a global reputation for quality and reliability in the VFX world. As the company grows, it needs an enterprise-level data storage environment to meet the demands of the company's global VFX studio clients.

To provide a future proof, enterprise level storage environment that could minimize the company's data centre footprint, Cumulus VFX turned to Pure Storage® and Agile Data Services to support an integrated data storage platform based on Pure Storage FlashBlade.

> "Pure is solid. They've got the redundancy and performance we need to free up storage bottlenecks and better support global clients."
>
> **NICKY LADAS, CHIEF TECHNOLOGIST,** CUMULUS VFX

Gaining a Magnitude of Difference for Massive Simulations

According to Nicky Ladas, Chief Technologist at Cumulus VFX, most of the organization's IT challenges came down to storage capacity—a common problem in the industry as technology demands grow. "There was no overhead left on our old storage subsystem," explains Ladas. "We had hit the wall from a capacity and performance point of view."

Impact on Cumulus VFX

Supports company growth into a global VFX provider

Enables number of rendering artists from 20 to 60

Meets Cumulus' commitment to ESG practices through providing a green data centre

Challenges

Create a future-proof storage environment for growing data demands

Process more complex VFX simulations for clients

Minimize environmental impact of data centre

Results

Meets enterprise-level SLAs with global VFX studio clients

Achieves six-nines availability for less impact on massive simulations

Reduces physical footprint through higher density and performance

Cumulus VFX now operates its entire production environment on a single FlashBlade—including current projects for Disney. The benefits were immediately noticeable, including increased performance, 99.9999% availability, and enhanced data security as mission-critical data can be encrypted at rest. The company also reduced the management time of applications from hours to minutes and seconds with the RapidFile Toolkit, and the advanced Linux integration. Specifically helping Cumulus VFX manage applications such as Houdini, Blender, Autodesk Maya, Sihouette FX, 3D Equalizer, and Adobe Photoshop.

As Chris Dawson, Director at Agile Data Services says, "Not only is data security paramount, so is the ability to avoid outages. If Cumulus VFX had an outage while doing massive workloads with developers, it would be a catastrophe."

"Pure Storage is already making a big difference in our ability to scale and remain agile," says Ladas. "For instance, we're doing work on massive ocean simulations, which require high performance storage and compute. With Pure, we gained a magnitude of performance difference in our outputs."

Meeting Obligations to the Planet

Even while expanding its data centre, Pure Storage enabled Cumulus VFX to minimize carbon emissions with higher rack density and improved performance.

"What Pure Storage provides in four or six units would take competitors 96 units," says Ladas. "I think there's an obligation for us decision makers to put the most efficient, lowest impact solutions in place. Pure Storage not only ticked all the performance and technical requirements, but it had the best energy footprint. The decision was a no-brainer. Pure is leaps ahead of the competition."

Taking on Top Global Productions

Cumulus VFX plans to expand its relationship with Pure Storage and Agile Data Services to support the overall growth of its business.

"We're already talking about doubling simulations," says Ladas. "I also want to bring in Pure Storage FlashArray to support our virtualized infrastructure, including VDI for remote users. Pure is solid. They've got the redundancy and performance that we need to free up storage bottlenecks and better support global clients."

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