

# Drama without the crisis

Goldcrest Films' Senior DI Systems Administrator, Neil Harrison, explains how Pixit Media offered a bespoke, scalable storage solution for Goldcrest's new drama department delivering better performance at a lower cost

**"Goldcrest covers everything from the moment a shoot starts. We consult with the DoP and the production team from the outset – running camera tests and establishing the pipeline. We'll help out the DIT, create LUTs and do on-set grading. We'll have equipment on-set to bring deliverables back and start work on them almost immediately.**

The post is all done here. We have two main grading theatres and a third smaller and three onlines. We have two main ADRs and two mix theatres in Lexington Street. In Dean Street we have our main Dolby Atmos Premier licensed Theatre 1 and an additional theatre. We run a dark fibre from Lexington Street to our other theatres in Dean Street. We can have up to date audio mixes for our customers while they're doing the grade.

## Drama

We have historically been a feature-based DI facility, but have now

ventured into the drama world. From the start of this year we've brought in some great talent and the pipeline had to change accordingly – from reel-based to episodic. We were committed to deliver a ten-episode drama - **Trust** for FX. We were going to bring in 8K R3D and work in 4K and we knew that would put a strain and push the boundaries of our existing system.

If we carried on the way we were, there would need to be two new mastering suites and two more online suites all playing back in real time for either features or drama. We had to expand and needed additional storage, operators, rooms, new workstations and hardware. Essentially, we were growing a new TV department.

It would have been easy to grow the current system because all of the clients are licensed. If we were putting in more hardware, we'd just add licenses to them, and add new fibres.

The problem we'd encounter with almost any storage hardware would be that we'd need additional data lines and possibly additional metadata lines – another Ethernet, another PCIe card to every workstation. And when you're looking at some of these workstations running Davinci Resolve when they're fully loaded, they have four additional GPUs. They're packed solid, so we'd need to find two more slots.

Our existing solution was also falling behind because it's tiered. You have to move data around within the storage and that requires an operator to manage it. It's expensive and on top of that you're adding support costs and high-priced licensing.

## On the green

While discussing all this over a round of golf with Richard Hayter-Gare of Pixit Media, he advocated PixStor as a solution.

It enables you to create data policy for GPFS – everything's offline until you hit a directory and it gets routed in to that high-performance area. The operators don't even need to know about it.

We started crunching numbers, sharing what we needed to deliver, and Pixit Media inspired us with confidence. We went to the Pixit lab at Chesham and left brimming with confidence. If there wasn't a solution, they found one very quickly.

We loaded up our 4K data in their system and the performance was good straight out of the box. However, Pixit CIO Barry Evans said, 'we can get more out of that'.

It took just a few lines of code and we had even better performance.

We came up with a hybrid system to run our existing SAN with all of its existing clients and sitting alongside that we have PixStor. The critical difference was the ability to work within our existing infrastructure

without adding additional Ethernet, fibre and PCIe cards.

They built and tested it all in the lab, delivered it and provided a schedule for everything. I just racked it all up and the next morning we checked the cables. It was one of the easiest installs I've ever had to do.

**"The cost of ownership has plummeted"**

Neil Harrison  
Senior DI Systems  
Administrator

## Total trust

We put the kit in during June and started on **Trust** in July. In the last six months we've delivered three dramas and next year we might have up to nine. The beauty of PixStor is that

## GOLDCREST

Goldcrest is London's most cutting-edge post production facility, catering specifically to the varied needs of feature film and long-form broadcast clients under one roof in our central Soho location.

Goldcrest uniquely provides end to end post production services in the heart of London. Its world renowned facilities encompass production offices and offline editorial suites, ADR recording, sound design and editorial suites, data management, film recording, conform and online editing, 2K, 4K and HDR colour correction in 2D & 3D and film scanning and recording.

Projects recently completed at Goldcrest include **Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri, Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom, The Favourite, Isle of Dogs, Trust, Murder on the Orient Express, A Very English Scandal** and **Killing Of A Sacred Deer**.

A Very English Scandal © BBC One

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