



Brown Bag Films realise their global virtual studio with pixstor & ngenea

Karma's World, Courtesy of KWBB Productions Limited/Karma's Works LLC as the copyright owners.

pixitmedia.
beyond expectations



Animation studio Brown Bag Films have always pushed the potential for what's possible. That's how they've established themselves as one of the world's most successful animation houses, crafting and creating over 23 different episodic series at once.

Their biggest challenge was a familiar one. How to share assets in the most efficient, intelligent way?

With sites in three different time zones, across three continents, and hundreds of animators, technicians and teams, this was an industry wide headache.

Two years ago, the Brown Bag Films team, led by John Brady SVP Technology, had a vision, they wanted to make their existing workflow pipeline definitively 'fit for the future'. A bold, brave enterprise that would push their tech teams, and collaborative partners, into uncharted territory.

Forging new territory, together

The task was daunting. A globally integrated, fully-shared production environment with Shotgrid integration.

This new seamless, unified data storage project would allow its teams to rapidly share assets and work more efficiently together, like never before. Liberating animators and creatives to focus on their true craft; bringing concepts to the screen.

Was this visionary, automated pipeline possible? Brown Bag turned to their current data access and storage partners at pixitmedia. And asked them to help them establish a world first, a truly global, virtual studio pipeline.

Escaping silos & time-zone frustration

The legacy problems were twofold. Teams in different time zones, working on the same files. All stored and sent in different ways, email, file share, and individual Google drives.

Hours were spent waiting to receive and download video and animation files, artwork and scripts from different time zones, only to discover the incorrect version had been sent or transfers had failed.

This left the team frustrated and extended project timelines. As the team expanded, the continued reliance on email and file-sharing systems was simply no longer practical.

Building a future-proof solution & collaborative partnership

Following their move to a cloud-native infrastructure, Brown Bag needed to get ahead of their file sharing problems.

Impressed with the initial automated pipeline results, Brown Bag management put their faith in John Brady alongside the pixonmedia team. Which meant Brown Bag could set up and run a bespoke standalone development team to focus 100% on getting the global virtual studio live.

“Getting our best and brightest focussed solely on making the automated virtual studio a reality was a risk, but one that’s more than paid off. It’s the reason the new pipeline is fully operational now.”

John Brady
SVP Technology at Brown Bag Films

Fortune favours the brave

One of the biggest challenges in the media space was always how to collaborate efficiently and intelligently. Instead of simply trying to fix their existing file access system, Brown Bag were willing to grip the problem, call



Xavier Riddle and the Secret Museum, Courtesy of XR 1 Productions Inc. as the copyright owner.

in smart collaborators from pixonmedia and set up their own dedicated team to make a new way of working from the ground up.

The result delivered is a tailored pixon storage solution powered by ngenea that enables users to efficiently access files across locations around the clock; with a minimal infrastructure investment and the lightest possible impact on bandwidth.

It allows users to search, access and work directly on files in desktop applications, no matter where those files are stored in the organisation. With a unified view of data at sites around the world, files are available to be worked on seamlessly. No specialist or user training required. Just simple and accessible.

Brown Bag artists and creatives can now give themselves over to their creative instincts, delivering their best work, instead of fighting against antiquated file sharing infrastructure.

“We’ve made sure that we’re creating the environment and the solutions to let artists be as creative as they can be, wherever they happen to be. Our artists really resonate with that attitude, making it as frictionless as possible for them to bring their idea into reality, so they can see what the reactions are in real-time.”

Boris Beaubien
VP Technology Toronto/New York,
Brown Bag Films

pixon Perfect

pixonmedia has a well-earned industry reputation for successful problem solving across the entire workflow and support well beyond the initial sale. ‘We wanted a truly collaborative relationship, not a box-shifting arrangement. pixonmedia got on board with our vision early on and has been with us every step of the way.’ explains Brady.

“We rely on progressive collaborators like Brown Bag to keep us on the leading edge. They bring us problems, questions and challenges. And we bring all our expertise to the fore to help them realise their vision.”

Barry Evans
Co-Founder & CTO, pixitmedia

Intelligent data movement: powered by ngenea

Software-defined and vendor agnostic, our pixstor storage platform fully integrates with commodity hardware, including Brown Bag’s legacy systems, user applications and in-house pipeline tools.

It easily manages petabytes of data and billions of files with guaranteed sustained high-performance, all under a global namespace, offering a single view for all users.

“It’s an overused word, but in this case the virtual studio pipeline is a genuine game changer for us. In Bali we are dealing with over 800,000 assets at any one time. We also need to do rendering, which requires a lot of storage space. But the key is, it is collaborative work. So we need to also have the same level of access, whether it is from Dublin, it is from Bali or Toronto, it must be the same experience, same level of access that’s provided to everyone.”

Daniel Harjanto
VP Technology Bali, Brown Bag Films



Ada Twist, Scientist. Courtesy of Netflix Worldwide Entertainment, LLC as the copyright owner.



Dylan. Courtesy of DD 1 Productions Inc. as the copyright owner.

ngenea, our dynamic data management layer, extends the pixstor filesystem and toolset across on-premise, multiple locations and out into the cloud. It intelligently pre-migrates files into the global namespace, making them readily available in any location to browse or download as projects demand. Designated working areas are established in the pixstor environment.

When data is uploaded, ngenea automatically updates the filesystem of each remote location to reflect the new content and path, without having to download any data until it is specifically needed, minimising egress costs and delays.

For this project, ngenea became the brain at the centre of Brown Bag’s bespoke asset management solution.

‘ngenea is the key to success,’ says Brady. ‘Basically, it monitors our sharing servers and keeps everyone in the chain up to date. It gives us complete visibility and control.’ ‘We now have an elegant cost-effective way to share and work together on files across sites and time-zones - all without the headache and complexity of a global patchwork.’

Ben Leaver, Co-Founder & CEO, pixitmedia agrees:

‘What Brown Bag has achieved is huge; not just in the VFX and post production space, but across the board, even going into other verticals such as manufacturing, engineering, architecture. It really is genuinely ground-breaking.’

Shifting the paradigm

The result for Brown Bag’s development group is a seamless global virtual pipeline, allowing sharing and collaborating on complex multi file projects across three different sites around the world.

As a result, the studio’s production flow is optimised company wide, letting creatives avoid workflow complexity and focus on creating brilliant animation.

Darren Hyland, Director of Technology at Brown Bag, explains:

‘Our users are now happily oblivious to what’s happening on the storage. The files are just there. Wherever they sit, it feels like they’re interacting in the next room rather than across the globe. The user experience is seamless.’



Angela's Christmas Wish,

Courtesy of Brown Bag Films Unlimited Company as the copyright owner.

'From artists in Dublin, writers in New York to designers in Bali, all members of the development team in each location now have access to everything, all at the same time.'

Successful Outcomes

The paxitmedia and Brown Bag Films collaboration has exceeded all expectations, transforming multi-site file access, movement and storage into a new virtual global studio solution.

Brown Bag teams can now instinctively access and work on files together across multiple sites, with minimal latency sensitivity and egress costs.

paxitmedia powered by ngenea provides a single scalable storage platform, adaptive to their future needs, enabling Brown Bag to reach new heights of creativity, productivity and innovation.

Darren Hyland explains the impact:

'We're actually up and running. I'll give you an example. In November, we began creating a show for Cartoon Network. The directors are in Dublin. But all the animation's happening in Toronto. All the sharing is via paxitmedia. The media, the assets. Everything.'

'This was impossible even earlier this year. It's a huge achievement, from a technical standpoint, but also demonstrates the new industry benchmark, truly global, truly collaborative, truly automated.'

In summary

Barry Evans, Co-Founder & CTO, paxitmedia, explains the importance of the close working relationship that paxitmedia and Brown Bag have, in

Solution Benefits

- Developing a game-changing automated global virtual studio pipeline
- Fast seamless real-time inter-site file-sharing for unrivalled productivity
- Enjoy huge performance gains when moving large amounts of data
- Tailored workflows and permissions driven by the Policy engine within the filesystem
- Integrated with paxitmedia Search to find and recall assets from across all storage tiers with ease
- Automatically migrate and recall data from different storage resources, as well as legacy storage, in a single global namespace
- Intelligent data movement that minimise egress costs and latency sensitivity
- The flexibility of a Cloud-enabled filesystem for hybrid infrastructure or a cloud-native future.

discovering innovative solutions that go beyond the industry standard:

'We have been with Brown Bag every step of this journey; it is industry leaders like Brown Bag that challenge us to find solutions with our products that move the needle for that day-to-day business.'

'What Brown Bag Films has achieved is the holy grail of a centralised asset management and data orchestration and we are immensely proud to have been a part of this vision.'

'We are looking forward to the next innovations we can develop together that benefit the industry as a whole.'

About paxitmedia.

paxitmedia delivers seamless collaboration to enable the power of ideas.

Our purpose-built, software-defined storage and data solutions simplify the flow of data to connect an increasingly complex world.

Our aim is to deliver beyond expectations throughout all areas of our operation. We devise solutions that give customers both choice and freedom, our restless innovation constantly pushes boundaries and the unrivalled care and knowledge of our team ensure optimum performance and value. Customer success is at the heart of our business.

We have a dedicated in-house lab facility to guarantee the effectiveness of our solutions.

paxitmedia is privately-owned and headquartered in the UK, with offices in the USA and Germany.

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