FUJITSU

Case Study
Weta Digital

»Fujitsu has helped build the computing foundation on which we can explore technical innovation and execute our award winning work.«

Kathy Gruzas, CIO, Weta Digital

The customer

Countries: New Zealand
Industry: Film & Entertainment
Founded: 1993
Website: www.wetafx.co.nz

The challenge

To provide IT infrastructure procurement and maintenance of high capacity systems in keeping with Weta Digital's international reputation for pushing technical and creative boundaries in delivering award-winning feature films.

The solution

- Building a partnership with Fujitsu for the system design and architecture
- Commissioning Fujitsu to undertake the relationship management with storage, networking and peripheral equipment suppliers
- Outsourcing the majority of the evaluation, procurement, installation and ongoing maintenance of the equipment to Fujitsu

Weta Digital

Weta Digital is a five-time Academy Award® winning visual effects and digital production services facility based in Wellington, New Zealand. Its reputation for creativity and delivery keeps it in high demand with some of the world's leading film studios, and film credits include The Lord of the Rings trilogy, Rise of the Planet of the Apes, Avatar and The Adventures of Tintin.

Weta Digital is a compute-intensive business, particularly since the production of the film Avatar (2009), which saw it build a data centre to house the largest number of CPU cores in the southern hemisphere at that time. Avatar used over 1 petabyte (1,000 terabytes) of storage for the rendering of its 3D CGI effects.

Much of Weta Digital's global reputation is in its ability to push creative and technical boundaries. Active in practical and foundational research, it has partnerships with a range of top research institutions around the globe.

Weta Digital has three petabytes (or 3,000 terabytes) of storage online at any one time. Its product array resold by Fujitsu includes NetApp storage and Brocade, Juniper and Arista networking equipment. The company's render wall contains 5,000 compact and efficient HP Blade servers.

The organisation is composed of over 800 crew at any given time across multiple local sites, linked via a private fibre network. The network features a 10 gigabit core and 200 gigabits per second of capacity to the renderwall.

The challenges

Weta Digital's IT team of 60, headed by CIO Kathy Gruzas, includes an eight-member systems group who must proactively build and maintain highly-available infrastructure in order for the facility to deliver upcoming films on time and on budget. The equipment refresh cycle does not follow a typical schedule; upgrades and expansion occurs in direct, rapid response to the creativity, innovation and technology requirements of each new project.

The benefits

- Fujitsu has invested heavily in understanding Weta Digital's business and developing relevant supplier relationships on its behalf
- Ensures the right people and technologies allocated to the project
- Supports security and confidentiality expectations of Weta Digital and its clients

Products and services

- Fujitsu-managed infrastructure services
- NetApp network storage
- Hewlett Packard blade servers
- Brocade networking
- Juniper networking
- Arista data centre networking

The volume of processing required puts constant pressure on Weta Digital's network, storage and data centre. Despite the use of free cooling and achieving a PUE of 1.18, power consumption remains a concern, making it essential for Weta Digital to seek efficiencies.

"As whole of life operational costs can exceed purchase cost, we evaluate the cost of ownership of every piece of equipment, particularly the power consumption. It requires the commitment of a highly competent procurement and management partner."
Kathy Gruzas, CIO, Weta Digital

The solution
Fujitsu has supported Weta Digital's ever-expanding IT infrastructure since the late 1990s and in many ways, is considered an extension of the systems team.

This proven combination undertakes all IT infrastructure architecture and design. Fujitsu then provides pre-sales specification and evaluation; installation, testing, maintenance and support.

By outsourcing its equipment supply and maintenance requirements to Fujitsu, the Weta Digital systems team can continue to focus on supporting core business requirements and providing high level strategy.

The benefits
Kathy Gruzas, Weta Digital's CIO, explains how the deep relationship with Fujitsu reduces the load on her internal team: "Fujitsu has invested enormous amounts of time over the years getting to know our crew and understanding our business. They know who'll we'll get on with and allocate only the right staff to our jobs.

"By acting as part of our purchasing department, their people liaise with vendors and ensure we get the best quote.. They then support our set up and maintenance.

Vendors send their product road maps to Fujitsu so its team's knowledge is always current. This helps us to set up evaluations, particularly in pressure situations. Fujitsu understands the different procurement processes of each of the suppliers and it's much easier for us to deal with just one interface.

Maintaining our systems, including the 5,000 servers, is a huge job. Fujitsu provides a single point of contact for the vendors and assists troubleshooting by collecting problem logs and support data. This enables us to continue our work while Fujitsu seamlessly supports our equipment.

Security of our customers' data is of paramount importance and in our business, a contractual obligation. Fujitsu's engineers adhere to our rules and processes so we can confidently allow them greater access to our data centre. They follow our guidelines closely and apply best practice wherever it is applicable.

Importantly, Fujitsu complements our relationship with our suppliers – reducing our administration workload but also allowing us to work closely with them on strategic requirements. We have direct access to each of our suppliers but Fujitsu has allowed us to consolidated some of the administration of these relationships.

Our top-notch crew combined with the support of Fujitsu as our systems partner means we can be confident that we have the infrastructure to deliver the big films and optimise our IT investment."
Kathy Gruzas, CIO, Weta Digital

In collaboration with

Contact
Fujitsu Australia and New Zealand
Address: Level 16, 15 Blue Street
North Sydney, NSW, 2060, Australia
Phone: +61-2-9113 9200
Fax: +61-2-9113 9222
E-mail: askus@au.fujitsu.com
Website: www.fujitsu.com/au
2012-03-14-FAL-EN

About Fujitsu
Fujitsu Australia and New Zealand is a full service provider of information technology and communication solutions. As the third largest ICT company in the Australian and New Zealand marketplace, we partner with our customers to consult, design, build, operate and support business solutions. From strategic consulting to application and infrastructure solutions and services, Fujitsu Australia and New Zealand have earned a reputation as the single supplier of choice for leading corporate and government organisations. Fujitsu Australia Limited and Fujitsu New Zealand Limited are wholly owned subsidiaries of Fujitsu Limited (TSE:6702).

www.fujitsu.com/au