

DOUBLE NEGATIVE

CREATING MAGIC WITH NETAPP AND MAJENTA

Double Negative relies on Majenta IT to implement and support a NetApp storage solution



Magic and Miracles

Strange creatures, stunning adventures, scary encounters and superbly created environments; these form the daily output of Double Negative's extensive team of creative artists. Founded in 1998 with 30 people, Double Negative is now Europe's largest provider of visual effects for film. It has worked on cinematic hits such as Godzilla, Thor: The Dark World, The Hunger Games: Catching Fire, Captain Phillips, Rush, Man of Steel, The Dark Knight trilogy and Inception and has won numerous awards. These include recognition for contributions to Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2, Sherlock Holmes and Inception amongst others. Operating from London and Singapore the company now also serves the television industry (DNeg TV) and has recently announced the creation of a Feature Animation division.

Collaborating with filmmakers from the earliest stages of a project, Double Negative helps develop ideas, concept imagery and production plans. The ability to deliver a creative service to the highest standard calls for deep technical expertise. "With back-up from vendors when required, we are relatively self-sufficient with regard to IT infrastructure and user support," says Steve Lynn, Head of Infrastructure. "We specify our own hardware, mostly Dell workstations and Dell servers, buying both directly and indirectly, using resellers primarily to negotiate the best deals. We buy standard industry software and in addition there is a large in-house R&D team continually creating and improving bespoke tools that enable artists to produce ground-breaking special effects."

Tight on Time and Space

Given the quick turnaround required by clients, Double Negative is always working under time and budget pressure. One of the biggest demands on the IT infrastructure is for storage, particularly that required for rendering."

Customer

Double Negative
<http://www.dneg.com>

Industry

Media and entertainment

Business challenge

- Ensure ultra-reliable business data storage for over 1000 users

Keys to success

- Long-term relationship provides continuity
- In-depth knowledge of Double Negative's IT needs and NetApp's business

Solution

Contract negotiation and supply of NetApp storage solution by Majenta Solutions

Business impact

- Reliable, cost-effective data storage underpins business continuity
- Automatic system monitoring ensures that any issues are quickly identified and resolved

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IT

“Our artists build scenes in stages/layers and send these to the render farm to create the final images. However demand on the system is continually growing; 3D/Stereoscopic films, for example, significantly increase storage requirements because at some stages there are two images, one for the left eye and one for the right eye. Eventually storage becomes a bottleneck and impedes rendering performance which slows down our artists.”

Double Negative has been expanding rapidly, opening an office in Singapore in 2009 and in 2012 consolidating three London office locations in new premises in Fitzrovia, central London. The office there has two cinemas and 12 screening rooms for checking daily 'film rushes'. It was the huge and growing demand for production and business data storage that resulted in Double Negative considering an enterprise level solution and led the company first to NetApp and then to Majenta as a reseller. “Because of its reliability and performance we decided that the NetApp platform was the best means of storing all our core business data, which includes user spaces, site tools. All these are critical; if a server storing this type of data were to fail, the whole company would stop working.”

A Safe Solution

“NetApp storage is rock solid. We can and have in the past lost a number of disks without facing serious problems,” comments Steve Lynn. “NetApp turned out to be a good choice from the start and as we have grown we have made several purchases through Majenta Solutions, adding more servers and upgrading. We now have various overlapping contracts. We have never lost any data and the support we receive is first class.

A Reliable Reseller

Steven Lynn notes that because Double Negative has extensive in-house expertise it usually goes direct to IT suppliers. “There is not usually a lot that a reseller can add yet we use Majenta Solutions. That is because the technical staff there have been immensely helpful over the years.” Double Negative prepares a specification in conjunction with NetApp, then leaves Majenta Solutions to negotiate contract details. “They really do know our business and we appreciate the continuity of talking to the same people. They always discuss high-level options with us and they definitely add value by securing us better deals. They seem to understand exactly what NetApp and Double Negative are trying to achieve and how each company works. As a result we turned to Majenta Solutions when we needed a solution for our Singapore office.”

The strength of the relationship with Majenta Solutions was demonstrated when Double Negative needed assistance to relocate. Majenta Solutions recommended a supplier with specialist skill in moving infrastructure. “The whole office move went really well yet we might not have found this company by ourselves. From experience we know that we can rely on Majenta Solutions to support our business outcomes.”

Manish Amlani, IT Division Director at Majenta Solutions, concludes: “The IT team at Double Negative has exceptional skill and experience. They work in an incredibly challenging environment in an industry that demands IT solutions which are as fast and scalable as possible. At Majenta we pride ourselves on our ability to deliver profitable business outcomes through the use of the latest technologies and we strive to develop longstanding relationships with our customers. We achieve this through working closely with their in house teams in order to maximise on existing resources. We are immensely proud and privileged that the accomplished IT team at Double Negative chooses us to support them.”



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“It is rare for us to work with a reseller yet Majenta Solutions generates value for us with every contract.

We never have to explain our business requirements to new salespeople and we always end up with a better deal than we could negotiate ourselves.”

Steve Lynn, Head of Infrastructure

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