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Powering immersive, interactive 360°entertainment experiences

Outernet turns to Dell PowerScale, Dell ECS and more to enable unique digital and physical storytelling on an unprecedented scale.
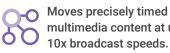

Outernet delivers stunning, immersive multi-sensory entertainment experiences spread across 2,300m^2 26K LED screens at its initial location in London's Soho district. Creating, storing and publishing content efficiently and cost-effectively on such a broad canvas now and in the future required a truly visionary solution from Dell Technologies.

Business results

- Provides breathtaking, immersive experiences for audiences and brands.

- Moves precisely timed multimedia content at up to 10x broadcast speeds.

- Allows assets to be synchronized globally for future Outernet districts.

- Enables creative teams to easily and efficiently create and update content.

- Ensures rapid time to value, thanks to Dell PowerScale's speed and flexibility.

Solutions

- Dell PowerScale
- Dell ECS
- Dell PowerEdge
- Dell PowerSwitch
- Dell Latitude laptops
- Dell Alienware laptops

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Outernet is a global media and entertainment company that creates connected city-center entertainment districts where music, film, art, gaming and retail experiences come together in captivating ways. The first such destination is Outernet London — located in Soho and encompassing Denmark Street, the UK's tin pan alley — featuring 200,000 sq. ft. of shops, restaurants, bars, music venues and digital entertainment spaces.

At the heart of Outernet London is its dazzling The Now Building. The four-story cube brings creative storytelling to life in unprecedented ways, projecting content across breathtaking 360° 26K HD screens that measure 45 feet high by nearly 80 feet wide. Immersive entertainment, music and digital art experiences offer brands unique opportunities for global product launches, live events, pop-up sampling and celebrity endorsements that engage and interact with diverse audiences, especially Gen Z.

"Our ambition is to offer creators from any background an opportunity to come and work in the space and showcase their creative talents on our amazing canvas."

Alexandra Payne
HEAD OF CREATIVE, OUTERNET

To power this space, Outernet and its systems integration partner, Qvest, deployed a Dell Technologies infrastructure including storage, servers, networking, laptops and workstations.

Architecting immersion
The volume of assets that must be moved to The Now Building's screens is truly massive. For example, one four-minute, multi-sensory experience the content team recently created required the transfer of 600 gigabytes of data. This necessitates performance and scalability that only PowerScale, ECS, Dell PowerEdge servers and Dell PowerSwitch software-defined wide area networking (SD-WAN) can provide.

Dell Technologies helped Outernet architect their network environment from the beginning. To handle all the data, Outernet employed Dell's PowerEdge servers powered by AMD in their infrastructure. "The amount of data and content they handle, at the speed they handle it, is what makes Outernet the world leading experience that it is," says CTO Mike Whittaker.

Director of Creative and Media Technology Jad Zouein works with the content on display, "We're constantly updating content, delivering assets in real time and integrating with social media platforms," Zouein explains. "PowerScale enables our videos to go from endpoints to nodes running the content in seconds. It's the best storage on the market."

Videos, games, music and graphics are moved at speeds up to 10x faster than broadcast or other applications. "PowerScale is the fastest way to get high-resolution content from our central library to the 30 engines running our screens, timed to the millisecond."

Publishing content globally
Outernet London is the first of what will be a growing number of immersive entertainment districts around the world — with future spaces planned for New York, Los Angeles, Dubai, Berlin and more. To efficiently and cost effectively synchronize the content from PowerScale to S3 nodes in the cloud, Outernet has tapped ECS enterprise object storage.

ECS delivers rich S3 compatibility on a globally distributable architecture, providing the foundation for Outernet to support and archive workloads in a cloud-native environment.

"Content that we publish in London is automatically synchronized from PowerScale to ECS using S3 object nodes," says Richard Blaney, Technical Operations Director at Outernet. "In addition, ECS can be easily geo-federated. So, content that we publish in London will be contained in one S3 object space and could be easily published and synchronized internationally as we open future Outernet districts."

ECS also lets the Outernet team easily send and receive third-party files and integrate them as needed. Content creators and managers with appropriate credentials can run secondary processes on assets, host them off-site in the cloud and then instantly deliver them from an endpoint with the help of the ECS platform.

"The scale we operate at, the real time nature of what we do… you need really powerful compute resource to do that. And we have that through our partnership with Dell."

Mike Whittaker
CTO, OUTERNET

Supporting creative teams
PowerScale, ECS, PowerEdge and the PowerSwitch SD-WAN are helping Outernet's teams create and deliver content in a smoother, more streamlined way.

The high-speed SD-WAN allows Outernet's Media Asset Management (MAM) system to write directly to PowerScale storage, transferring the large files using Samba share. In addition, this design also enables remote team members working from anywhere to view and access PowerScale storage as if it were a networked drive — to meet the timing demands for delivering content to the screens.

"Every authorized team member has an SD-WAN device plugged into their remote network, so they can access our PowerScale cluster as if it were in their local workspace," Blaney relates.

Adds Zouein, "The overall speed is a big part of how PowerScale, ECS and our other Dell Technologies solutions are accelerating our time to value. It affects testing, helps our creative team make better use of their time and it's essential for live events. We need solutions that are highly responsive and flexible."

"PowerScale is the fastest way to get high-resolution content from our central library to the 30 engines running our screens, timed to the millisecond."

Jad Zouein
MEDIA SOLUTIONS MANAGER, OUTERNET

Meeting unmatched challenges

Outernet is truly a groundbreaking undertaking. Not surprisingly, it also brings with it unmatched challenges.

"The scale we operate at, the real time nature of what we do… you need really powerful compute resource to do that." remarks Whittaker "And we have that through our partnership with Dell."

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