

## State-of-the-art movie making requires instant data access

Lightstorm Entertainment creates immersive visual experiences for moviegoers with high-speed scalable storage and server infrastructure.



Media and Entertainment

United States

### Business needs

At Lightstorm Entertainment, producer of “Avatar” and other blockbuster movies, pushing the threshold of cinematic innovations is standard. Because these advancements generate vast data volumes, the firm depends on Dell EMC solutions to scale easily and accelerate production workflows.

### Solutions at a glance

- [Dell EMC ECS Object Storage](#)
- [Dell EMC PowerScale](#)
- [Dell EMC VxRail Hyperconverged Infrastructure](#)

### Business results

- Scales easily to handle an avalanche of data and astronomical data creation rates.
- Storage admin time savings allocated to create blockbuster digital animations.
- Avoided hiring at least two FTEs to support infrastructure growth.

# 96%

reduction in virtualized server deployment cut from 6 weeks to 1.5 days.



# 750+

million real-time files, metadata and databases across eight global sites.



When science fiction blockbuster “Avatar” was released, the ground-breaking 3D special effects created an unprecedented immersive experience for moviegoers. James Cameron, producer and director of “Avatar” and founder of Lightstorm Entertainment, continues to drive the movie industry. These advancements generate massive, fast-growing volumes of data, requiring Lightstorm Entertainment’s IT team to deploy high-performance solutions that help accelerate production workflows.

Tim Bicio, chief technical officer at Lightstorm entertainment explains, “We’re shooting 48 frames-a-second in 4K and stereo, and with multiple rigs recording live action. An avalanche of data comes at us daily, and our data creation growth rates are astronomical.”

To meet these rigorous demands, Lightstorm Entertainment uses PowerScale—the Dell EMC scale-out network-attached storage (NAS) family, which includes Isilon—for digital media assets. The producer also uses Dell EMC ECS object storage for long-term archiving. Lightstorm Entertainment’s applications and databases run on Dell EMC VxRail Hyperconverged Infrastructure, a preconfigured solution that integrates VMware vSAN and Dell PowerEdge Rack Servers.

## Super-fast, secure production workflow

In a fast-paced industry, agility and speed are vital. Lightstorm Entertainment’s infrastructure manages over 750 million files, metadata and databases that are replicated across eight sites in the U.S. and New Zealand.

“Dell EMC ECS, Isilon all-flash, VxRail and the PowerEdge servers have helped us enormously with meeting our high-demand scalability and performance requirements,” explains Bicio. “When we shoot in New Zealand, film appears on our asset management system in the U.S. immediately. Dell EMC technologies accelerate our production workflow because they move data across our global sites quickly and securely.”

*“Dell EMC technologies accelerate our production workflow because they move data across our global sites quickly and securely.”*

Tim Bicio,  
Chief Technical Officer,  
Lightstorm Entertainment

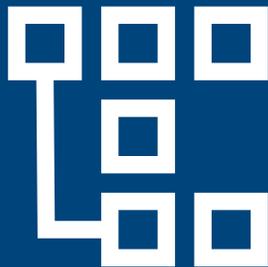
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Tim Bicio,  
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Simplified management  
of near-term media and  
long-term archiving.



## Storage ecosystem increases efficiency

Consolidating storage on ECS and Isilon has contributed to increased efficiency and productivity.

“With Isilon handling near-term media assets and ECS managing long-term archiving, we have an entire ecosystem of storage,” Bicio says. “We can view and manage everything centrally. Because Isilon is so easy to use, we don’t need as many people to manage storage. In fact, we avoided hiring at least two FTEs even as our infrastructure continues to grow.”

## Up and running in 1.5 days

Bicio values speed of deployment, especially given tight movie production deadlines.

“The VxRail arrived on the loading dock, and one-and-a-half days later it was up and running and in production,” recalls Bicio. “Previously, it took six weeks to get the servers and virtualized environment fully deployed. VxRail has saved us significant time and cost.”

## High-value partnership

Lightstorm Entertainment views Dell Technologies as a strategic partner. Bicio recalls, “Dell EMC Services was amazing with installing ECS, VxRail and Isilon. There was nothing left for us to do. Their support has been priceless.”

He concludes, “When you’re pushing technology as hard as we do, your partners are important. Dell Technologies has been so great because they’ve helped us solve many problems around storage and virtual compute. That gives us more time for projects that deliver direct value to our movie productions.”



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