ATK PLN
adds artist workstations and render nodes on demand — with Teradici Cloud Access Software and Google Cloud

ATK PLN (pronounced "attack plan") is a design-first creative studio with expertise in design, animation, and live action. Fusing rich visuals with feature film finesse, ATK PLN tells stories on screens of all sizes. Award-wining projects range from the animation logo for Paramount to ads for Lay's Poppables and McDonalds, to The LEGO Movie 2 and LEGO Batman. ATK PLN is a sister company to Reel FX Animation Studios.

> **"** Application performance with Teradici Cloud Access Software is phenomenal. I can work on dual 4K monitors at home and completely forget my workstation is back in the office.

PATTON TUNSTALL
COMPUTER GRAPHICS SUPERVISOR, ATK PLN

Challenges

- Enable artists to work from anywhere, on any device, without compromising performance or security
- Quickly add freelancer workstations and rendering capacity
- Protect clients' intellectual property
- Give artists the latest hardware, for a competitive edge

Solutions

- During the pandemic, installed Teradici Cloud Access Software on office workstations and employees' personal devices
- For freelancers in other locations, provisioned virtual workstations on Google Cloud, accessible from any device with Teradici Cloud Access Software
- Built a temporary render farm with 200+ nodes on Google Cloud, managing the supervisor node via Teradici Cloud Access Software

Results

- Quickly transitioned to working from home during the pandemic
- Gained an edge in attracting and retaining artists by offering remote work option
- Rendered 15TB of data (400 stereo frames output) in Google Cloud overnight
- Protected creative content by never storing it on endpoints

teradici

www.teradici.com

ATK PLN is known for its bold approach to IT—experimenting with cutting-edge hardware and software to create amazing animation with faster turnaround. The company has about a dozen artists in its state-of-the-art Dallas studio, which it shares with Reel FX.

Using powerful workstations with NVIDIA Quadro RTX graphics cards, ATK PLN's artists work with graphics-intensive applications like Autodesk Maya, Autodesk RV, Nuke, Houdini, Adobe Substance Designer, and Unreal Engine.

"Traditionally, all artists worked in the studio," says Patton Tunstall, computer graphics supervisor. "For more flexibility, we wanted a secure way to give employees and freelancers access to our workstations and applications from anywhere." The company tried Virtual Network Computing (VNC) software, but the experience was poor because of the non-native interface and low frame rate.

Then ATK PLN discovered Teradici Cloud Access Software, which allows artists to securely connect to physical or virtual workstations from anywhere, on any device. "We were floored by Teradici Cloud Access Software's performance," says Tunstall. "One of our freelancers in Australia used it to work on a virtual machine in Google Cloud using the NVIDIA T4 Tensor Core GPU instance—and quickly forgot he wasn't working on a local machine."

During the pandemic, ATK PLN decided to keep workstations in the studio instead of sending them home with employees—a security precaution. "From our tests, we already knew that Teradici Cloud Access Software performs great and supports the dual 4K displays and Wacom devices our artists use," says Jon Speer, technical supervisor. Teradici software also meets the studio's stringent security requirements: content is never stored on endpoints because only encrypted pixels travel from the workstation to the display.

The week before shelter-in-place orders took effect, employees brought their personal Windows, Mac, and Linux devices to the office to have Teradici Cloud Access software installed. Employees went home to work on a Monday, and by the next day the entire team was working on their office workstations from home.

"Application performance with Teradici Cloud Access Software is phenomenal," Tunstall says. "I work on dual 4K monitors at home, and applications are as responsive as they are when I'm in the office." Approximately 100 artists in the Reel FX studio in Montreal use the same solution, connecting from their home computers to workstations in Dallas.

"Even when they're 1,700 miles away from their workstations, artists notice very little difference in application performance with Teradici Cloud Access Software," says Speer. That's because Teradici Cloud Access Software adapts

teradici

> 66 *With Teradici Cloud Access Software and Google Cloud, we have a start-to-finish pipeline for modeling, rendering, and compositing—it's unprecedented.*

PATTON TUNSTALL
COMPUTER GRAPHICS SUPERVISOR
ATK PLN

to network conditions to deliver a good experience even with network latency up to 250 milliseconds.

Support for working from home is helping ATK PLN attract and retain top talent. Now ATK PLN can hire freelancers anywhere, avoiding travel costs. Employees like knowing they can work from any location. They also appreciate the flexibility to work outside of typical business hours—whether they've been waiting on a render all day, or they simply want to balance home life with working from home.

"I encourage my artists to set their own hours," Tunstall says. "During the lockdown they're actually putting in more hours because they can work when inspiration strikes. Someone who wakes up at 11:00 p.m. after a nap with all cylinders firing is more efficient than they would be if they had to slog into the office at 9:00 a.m."

ATK PLN now has the agility to scale up for special projects with a few clicks. If a client has a time-sensitive request, the company can quickly spin up a render farm in Google Cloud—chosen for its fast server provisioning (default values are already filled in), outstanding support, and advanced NVIDIA graphics processing units. The test came when a client requested a new asset to be added to a project with an exceptionally tight turnaround time: a lake the size of a football field. The new environment had to be rendered in one week. "With our on-premises farm we couldn't have met the deadline," Speer says. "By spinning up a 200-node farm on Google Cloud we were able to render overnight." Speer managed the supervisor node for the Arnold renderer from his home laptop, using Teradici Cloud Access Software.

Next up for ATK PLN: virtual workstations on Google Cloud. Working on the latest hardware gives ATK PLN an edge in creating stunning animation with fast turnaround. "Today's hardware has the power to produce 4K content, but at some point 8K content will take its place," Tunstall says. "With Google Cloud we can delete our existing virtual workstations and spin up new ones with the latest hardware in minutes. Not having to worry about hardware frees us to focus on our craft."

Tunstall concludes, "With Teradici Cloud Access Software and Google Cloud, we have a start-to-finish pipeline for modeling, rendering, and compositing—it's unprecedented."

teradici