Established in 2010, UK-based Pixit Media creates highly scalable, enterprise-class storage, network and archive solutions for the post-production and broadcast industries. Deployed by leading content creation and distribution organizations around the world, the company’s solutions have supported commercially successful Oscar, BAFTA and Emmy award-winning television programs, film visual effects, computer-generated imagery, sports broadcasts, commercials and music videos.

**Business challenge**
To keep audiences spellbound with their output, media and entertainment companies must be able to share, store and access huge files—but traditional infrastructure solutions were failing to deliver.

**Transformation**
Pixit Media put consistent performance and chart-topping scalability in the limelight, through software-defined solutions based on IBM Spectrum Storage technology that help clients create hit after hit.

**Pixit Media**
Takes the media and entertainment industry by storm with solutions that keep the action rolling

With Spectrum Scale there’s no guesswork: you can use capacity to its full potential and scale up with predictable pricing. In the competitive media and entertainment sector, this is a real advantage.”

Barry Evans
Chief Technology Officer and Co-Founder
Pixit Media

**Business benefits:**

**Up to 98%**
performance and capacity efficiency drives up resource utilization

**Offers**
greater control of costs, helping clients cope with pressure on profit margins

**Enables**
clients to embrace new opportunities, confident they can scale resources fast

Share this
Removing limits to imagination

Visual effects allow creators to take audiences on hyper-real, fantastical journeys. Through their magic, the teams behind films, television programs, music videos and commercials can transport viewers to other worlds. Today more than ever, creators are under pressure to preserve and future-proof media content.

Ben Leaver, Chief Executive Officer and Co-Founder at Pixit Media, explains: “Content today has to be the highest resolution, the highest frame rate, and the highest color depth possible because movies and shows live forever. Billions of dollars come in from these shows over time and people see them 25, 50, 100 years into the future. They want to make sure that product is as good as possible for whatever technology is used to view this content in the future.”

To create content that endures, media and entertainment companies need more from their technology, but traditional infrastructure solutions were failing to keep pace.

Barry Evans, Chief Technology Officer and Co-Founder of Pixit Media, picks up the story: “Media and entertainment companies have varied and unpredictable IT needs, making it difficult to find one solution to fulfil their requirements. As a result, many firms end up with islands of tech, with one system for rendering, another for 3D effects, and so on, making scalability a real challenge.

“Also, teams often have to transfer huge, ultra-high definition video and image sequences between systems, leading to long delays where users can do nothing but wait. There is intense pressure on profit margins in this sector, making idle time less than ideal. We saw an opportunity to revolutionize the industry’s approach to IT resource management through the power of software-defined solutions—but we needed the right technology to make this goal a reality.”

Bringing PixStor to life

Pixit Media created PixStor, a software-defined storage platform specifically designed for the media and entertainment market that enables rapid and reliable access to files within a single namespace. At the heart of PixStor is IBM Spectrum Scale™.

Ben Leaver comments: “We took IBM Spectrum Scale and focused it in on the high-end editing space, because it’s the only technology that can keep up with the increasingly high frame rates that are emerging. Our competitors rely on Fibre Channel solutions, which are struggling to get past 4K resolutions, while the industry is heading to 8K very quickly.”

Barry Evans recalls: “One of the key reasons we chose Spectrum Scale to support PixStor is its scatter allocation method, which ensures you always get the same performance from the underlying disk, curing one of the most common challenges in the media and entertainment sector.

“With IBM Spectrum Scale, users can scale their infrastructure up or down using commodity hardware. Also, it allows multiple users to access data at the same time. To put this into perspective: a five-minute clip of full 4K raw footage at 24 frames/second can consume more than 5 TB of capacity, and so transferring this data over a 10 Gb pipe will take approximately 80 minutes (assuming the fastest possible disk at both sender and receiver). We cut all of this out with concurrent editing, offering huge time savings for our clients. We add value to Spectrum Scale through APIs that enable a simple user interface, data analytics and more, plus end-to-end support that spans from disk to desktop.”
Working with IBM Global Financing enabled Pixit Media to secure the IBM technology under favorable terms, as Barry Evans explains: “We took advantage of a promotion offering a three-month payment deferral, followed by three interest-free quarterly payments. That meant that we could recoup revenues from our clients before paying IBM, enabling us to scale our sales and operations to other territories far more rapidly.”

Recently, Pixit Media entered into an Embedded Solution Agreement (ESA) with IBM, which includes access to support and a pre-determined discount level over the lifetime of the agreement. Barry Evans adds: “As a service provider with a short buying cycle that is experiencing fast growth, the ESA ensures we can capitalize on emerging opportunities fast.”

Pixit Media has also begun offering solutions based on IBM Spectrum Archive™, which provides direct, intuitive and graphical access to data stored in IBM tape drives and libraries.

Barry Evans comments: “Most of our clients have complex requirements when it comes to archiving a project—they want to move it to a reliable media on a project-by-project basis, but without having to manually manage the library. With Spectrum Archive we can offer them a worry-free, centralized approach to managing this process, which we can set up in just two to three days and scale out extremely quickly.”

“IBM Spectrum Scale delivers near to 98 percent performance and capacity efficiency, which is far higher than most competing options,” says Barry Evans. “Our customers tell us that competing filesystems usually start to provide unreliable performance at 70 percent capacity usage, so we can prevent them wasting as much as 28 percent of their resources.”

Ben Leaver adds: “One of the other great features of IBM Spectrum Scale is the ability to store metadata with the file. Users can take advantage of AI and machine learning capabilities with metadata tagging for recognizing faces, product placement, actor positioning and background scenery. When people search huge amounts of content, they can find what they want quickly and easily because of this tagging, which is another great example of how IBM Spectrum Scale can take media and entertainment companies into the future.”

Pixit Media’s clients are also free from the need to over-provision resources to ensure that they can cope with sudden demand, enabling significant cost savings.

Wowing users so they can dazzle audiences

With PixStor, media and entertainment companies can get the most out of their investments in IT resources. Armed with consistent performance, the company’s clients, such as visual effects companies, broadcasters and post-production houses, can be confident that they can play videos at the same frame rate every time. This capability can be invaluable when sitting in front of their own customers.

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“With Spectrum Scale there’s no guesswork: you can use capacity to its full potential and scale up with predictable pricing,” elaborates Barry Evans. “We’ve been able to offer customers TCO that is as low as 25 percent that of the competition, depending on the circumstances. In the crowded media and entertainment sector, where margins are under powerful downward pressure, this is a real advantage.”

By giving clients greater control of IT costs aligned with exceptional performance, Pixit Media is establishing itself as a partner to growth.

Barry Evans concludes: “The combination of Pixit Media and IBM Spectrum Storage technologies can help media and entertainment firms rise to the challenge of more complex and resource-hungry projects. Equipped with our solutions, they can take advantage of new opportunities without worrying about horsepower behind the scenes, enabling them to bring thrilling entertainment to a screen near you.”

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Ben Leaver, Chief Executive Officer and Co-Founder at Pixit Media

Solution components
- IBM Global Financing
- IBM® Spectrum Archive™
- IBM Spectrum Scale™

Take the next step
To learn more about IBM Spectrum Storage solutions, please contact your IBM representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit the following website: ibm.com/storage/spectrum

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