

# DreamWorks speeds film production with HP Halo Collaboration Studio

Studio's image and audio transmission capabilities unify geographically dispersed creative teams



"Innovation is a critical part of the filmmaking process at DreamWorks Animation, and HP is always willing to push the envelope. The engineering talents at HP have helped us create a profoundly new virtual experience that rivals in-person collaboration. Halo is fundamentally changing how we run our business."  
— Ed Leonard, Chief Technology Officer, DreamWorks Animation



## Objective:

Speed film production, link creative teams.

## Approach:

HP Halo Collaborative Studio.

## IT improvements:

- Trouble-free conferencing systems.
- End-to-end video collaboration.
- Remote-site connections.
- High-function collaborative work rooms.
- Instant voice and video data transmission.
- Excellent video and audio quality.

## Business benefits:

- Production efficiencies.
- Speeds production.
- Unifies work teams.
- Decreases travel costs.
- Increases time efficiency.
- Enhance profitability.

HP customer case study: HP Halo Collaboration Studio enables DreamWorks Animation SKG to unify creative teams, accelerate production

Industry: Motion picture



Once upon a time, three princes came together to build a great kingdom. But their artisans, craftsmen and builders were scattered far and wide, and could not easily speak with one another...

This could be the beginning of a movie from DreamWorks Animation SKG—maker of Shrek, Shrek2, and Shrek the Third. But it isn't. It's the true story of how DreamWorks used the HP Halo Virtual Collaboration Studio to accelerate its production processes and ease collaboration among top animators.

DreamWorks was formed in 1994 by industry icons Steven Spielberg, Jeffrey Katzenberg and David Geffen to produce high-quality family entertainment through the use



of computer-generated animation. Its 2001 release *Shrek* won the first-ever Academy Award® for Best Animated Feature Film. Sequel *Shrek2* ended its theatrical run as the third highest-grossing domestic release to that time and the highest-grossing animated film to date. *Shrek the Third* brought in \$122 million in its first weekend — the best-ever debut for an animated film.

Animation of this quality takes a lot of collaboration. Based in Glendale, Ca., DreamWorks works in close partnership with its subsidiary Pacific Data Images— 400 miles to the north in Redwood City, Calif.

Given the wide geographic dispersal of the DreamWorks sites, team members soon found themselves spending too much time and money on airplanes. In addition, DreamWorks executives wanted to speed production processes to release two films a year instead of the industry norm of only one film every 18 to 36 months.

The initial solutions tried were standard conferencing systems. But it was obvious to people that they were talking into a system with a tiny camera attached. It felt artificial. Plus, the system ran into numerous technical glitches, forcing the studio to spend more time repairing miscommunications than developing relationships. Managing multiple productions across multiple sites grew even more time consuming.

#### **HP Halo Collaboration Studio eases communication**

Then DreamWorks turned to HP. Together, the companies developed and implemented a plan to equip each DreamWorks production site with an HP Halo Collaboration Studio.

The turnkey HP Halo Collaboration Studio is a comfortably designed work room with pleasing décor and great acoustics. The room is equipped with unobtrusive recessed cameras and a high-magnification, high-zoom document camera that

## Customer solution at a glance

### **Primary applications**

Film production

### **Primary hardware**

- Recessed cameras
- Zoom document camera
- Plasma display screens

- Collaboration screen
- Audio communication technologies

### **HP Services**

- Combined maintenance and technology updates

“Halo has fundamentally changed how DreamWorks does business – transforming the way teams collaborate, while cutting travel time and costs. Studio executives say it’s like the difference between using a typewriter compared to a computer.”

Ed Leonard, Chief Technology Officer,  
DreamWorks Animation



enables individuals to zoom in on objects on a table, revealing fine color and pattern detail. On the studio walls hang carefully color-calibrated, high-definition conference displays that can show life-size images of the remote participants. Above the conference displays is mounted a collaboration monitor. Finally, sophisticated audio communications technologies facilitate multiple two-way conversations. Participants thus can easily share documents and data, and play full-motion video, directly from their notebook PCs onto the collaboration monitor for all to see. An in-room phone bridge allows people outside the HP Halo locations to dial in and also participate in the discussions.

Configured to be walk-in ready—no “on” or “pause” buttons—the virtual studios are easy to use and consistently reliable. Users are hosted via a guided interface backed by the end-to-end, 24x7 coverage of HP concierge support. This removes all technical distractions and enables meeting participants to focus on their agenda and on one another. Also to keep things simple, HP includes all maintenance and technology updates as part of its monthly service program.

Behind the scenes, the proprietary Halo Video Exchange Network (HVEN) uses a dedicated network line to deliver a secure, full duplex network that puts no additional load on DWA’s existing infrastructure. This

high-bandwidth network enables a “tele-immersive” user experience that is stunningly life-like. Participants feel as though they are physically together in one room; there’s no perceived latency, just instantaneous global communication.

#### **Easier collaboration, faster production**

“Halo has fundamentally changed how DreamWorks does business—transforming the way teams collaborate, while cutting travel time and costs,” says Ed Leonard, Chief Technology Officer, DreamWorks Animation. “Studio executives say it’s like the difference between using a typewriter compared to a computer.”

Today animators and producers in geographically disperse locations can meet face-to-face as needed to develop storyboards and review artwork, allowing real-time adjustments to character designs. The high-magnification object camera allows users to draw directly on printouts seen simultaneously by meeting participants everywhere. Users can even play full-motion video directly from their notebook PCs onto the collaboration screen—a great way to share film rough cuts. Halo delivers full-size images with seamless, easy-to-use, real-time communication across the globe—allowing participating teams to leverage one another’s talents, resources and experience to develop the highest-quality product possible.



Using its HP Halo Collaboration Studios, DreamWorks in 2004 became the first company ever to release two animated films in one year—Shrek2 and Shark Tale. Its subsequent release Madagascar grossed more than \$525 million in worldwide box office and was one of the top films of 2005.

DreamWorks also has slashed its travel costs. With Halo's virtual solution, senior executives have reduced their international travel from one trip every three weeks to one trip every three months, and their trips between Glendale and Redwood City have dropped significantly. Leonard explains he has reduced his trips between northern and southern California by as much as 80 percent.

"Halo rooms change your reason for flying," says Jeffrey Katzenberg, DWA's chief executive officer. "You travel to maintain relationships – not to do work."

With the HP Halo Collaboration Studio, DreamWorks says goodbye to unnecessary travel, lost time, bad airline food and jetlag. It says hello to efficient collaboration, workflow synergy and a future of unlimited creative possibility.

Or, as Donkey exclaims in Shrek the Third: "I smell Shrek Jr.!"

To learn more, visit [www.hp.com](http://www.hp.com)

© 2007 Hewlett-Packard Development Company, L.P. The information contained herein is subject to change without notice. The only warranties for HP products and services are set forth in the express warranty statements accompanying such products and services. Nothing herein should be construed as constituting an additional warranty. HP shall not be liable for technical or editorial errors or omissions contained herein.

4AA1-4261ENW, July 2007

