

CASE STUDY

Studio AKA Scaling Creative Workflows with ERA's On-Demand Infrastructure

BACKGROUND

Studio AKA is a multi-BAFTA and Emmy award-winning animation studio, celebrated for its distinctive storytelling and design-led approach. Based in London and operating for over 30 years, Studio AKA produces original series and commissioned projects for major global brands and broadcasters.

Their portfolio includes their hit pre-school show *Hey Duggee*, *Activate* - an animated exercise series created in collaboration with Joe Wicks, the main titles for *Queen Charlotte* and *Raised by Wolves* plus a range of documentary and commercial work - all showcasing the studio's commitment to creative excellence and technical innovation.

At the heart of Studio AKA's work is a dedication to originality, artistry and storytelling that resonates across audiences and genres. The studio continues to focus on entertainment production with a strong emphasis on original IP development, building a body of work that is as distinctive as it is internationally celebrated.

CHALLENGES

As project complexity and resolution demands increased, Studio AKA began to encounter challenges with their on-premise infrastructure.

The team was in production on a high-profile title sequence for a major global TV series and needed additional rendering capacity to meet delivery deadlines.

AT A GLANCE

THE CHALLENGES

- Render capacity limits
- Tight delivery deadlines
- Costly, space-restricted upgrades
- Growing backup demands
- Remote collaboration needs

THE SOLUTIONS

- Tailored cloud on-demand infrastructure
- On-demand render and workstation power
- High-speed dark fibre link
- 500TB hybrid cloud storage
- Secure remote access

THE RESULTS

- Scaled render capacity fast
- Faster, low-latency workflows
- Reliable cloud backup and recovery
- Seamless hybrid production
- Lower on-prem costs
- Future-ready growth

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CHALLENGES CONTINUED

Their existing render farm and workstations were reaching performance limits and upgrading or expanding on-site wasn't a viable option, both due to space constraints and the high cost of new hardware.

At the same time, the studio needed a more robust disaster recovery and backup solution for their growing archive, which spanned several hundred terabytes. With limited rack space on-site and a small data centre footprint, they required a secure, scalable and cost-effective offsite storage option that could be accessed quickly when needed.

Remote working also became a permanent part of their pipeline following COVID-19, increasing the need for stable, high-performance connectivity to cloud resources and remote workstations. They needed a setup to enable seamless collaboration across the team, ensuring everyone could work together efficiently, no matter where they were located.



"We were hitting the limits of what our on-prem systems could handle. We needed a way to scale render capacity quickly without investing in more hardware or disrupting production."

Lawrence Pankhurst
Head of CG at **Studio AKA**

THE SOLUTION

Studio AKA turned to ERA for a flexible, fully managed Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) solution designed around their specific production needs. ERA delivered a tailored setup combining performance, scalability and reliability across key services:

"It's been a genuinely great partnership, ERA understands the pressures of production and has built a service that fits the way studios actually work."

Brandon Bayliss
IT Manager at **Studio AKA**

Flexible.Fast.Efficient

THE SOLUTION

- **Remote Workstations and Render Nodes** – High-performance remote workstations providing cost-effective scalable render and creative capacity on demand – enabling Studio AKA to scale capacity during peak production periods without investing in permanent hardware.
- **High-Speed Dark Fibre Connectivity** – A high-speed dark fibre link between Studio AKA and ERA's data centre, enabling seamless transfer of large files, improved throughput for rendering and storage workflows and ultra-low latency collaboration.
- **Hosted Storage and Backup** – A secure, cloud-hosted 500TB Storage environment providing hybrid storage, redundancy and offsite backup to safeguard valuable assets and ensure robust disaster recovery – all while maintaining fast, reliable accessibility.
- **Hosted HP Anyware Connector** – For secure access, supporting hybrid and fully remote workflows across their creative teams.
- **Dell PowerScale Support** – Ongoing technical support for Studio AKA's Dell PowerScale (Isilon) storage system, ensuring reliable performance, smooth integration with their production environment and consistent connectivity between on-prem and cloud workflows.

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THE SOLUTION CONTINUED

ERA's support team worked closely with Studio AKA throughout the setup – configuring, optimising and even upgrading system resources within hours when rendering performance needed an extra boost.



"The response times from ERA has been incredible, we asked for additional RAM on the render nodes and it was done the same day without any additional costs. That kind of flexibility is exactly what you need when you're up against a delivery deadline."

Brandon Bayliss

THE RESULTS

ERA's IaaS solution enabled Studio AKA to complete their title sequence on schedule and to the high standard expected by their global client. The additional render power proved critical in meeting deadlines, while the dark fibre connection ensured rapid, reliable transfer of large data sets between on-prem and cloud systems.

Key outcomes included:

- **Increased Render Capacity** – With faster turnaround times on demanding projects.
- **Improved Reliability and Uptime** – Through ERA's proactive monitoring and rapid support response.
- **Simplified Backup and Disaster Recovery** – Ensuring critical data is always protected and recoverable.
- **Hybrid Workflow Enablement** – Supporting artists both on-site and remotely.
- **Reduced On-Prem Footprint** – Helping the studio move towards more sustainable, cloud-based operations.
- **Future-Ready Growth** – ERA's scalable infrastructure positioned the studio for growth, allowing them to run multiple projects simultaneously and confidently take on more ambitious work, setting them up for long-term success.



"Having ERA's infrastructure behind us gave the team confidence, we could push through heavy renders without worrying about downtime or hardware failures. It just worked. It felt like ERA were working with us, not just for us and that support made all the difference".

Lawrence Pankhurst

SUMMARY

By partnering with ERA, Studio AKA gained the flexibility, scalability and performance needed to meet tight deadlines and evolving creative demands – all without the cost and constraints of traditional hardware expansion.

ERA's tailored IaaS solutions, supported by real-time technical expertise, continue to help Studio AKA deliver visually stunning content efficiently and sustainably, positioning them for future growth in an increasingly cloud-driven production landscape.

"The best part was how collaborative it felt, ERA really felt like part of our team – always on hand, especially when we had high demand for machines. They were incredibly quick to get back to us and onboarding new workstations was seamless. Their proactive support made a huge impact".

Brandon Bayliss



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