

CASE STUDY

Blue Zoo

How Blue Zoo Scaled Production with ERA's Flexible, Sustainable IaaS

ABOUT BLUE ZOO

Blue Zoo is a multi-E Emmy and BAFTA-winning animation studio creating standout content for audiences worldwide. Known for bringing to life beloved brands such as LEGO City, Numberblocks and many more, their work spans far beyond animation production. Blue Zoo develops a mix of internal and external IP, supporting projects from initial concept and funding through to international distribution and licensing. This end-to-end approach extends into co-development, mobile games, YouTube and social media channels, helping to grow characterful brands across multiple platforms.

With a proven episodic and short film pipeline built on efficiency and artistic excellence, and with new advancements including upcoming 4K production alongside live-action plates, Blue Zoo continues to evolve its technical and creative capabilities and consistently delivers animated series and films that both resonate with audiences and support wider commercial goals.

As a certified B Corp, the studio is committed not only to world-class storytelling but also to positively impacting its staff, clients, audiences and the planet. Every operational decision including technology infrastructure must align with these values. This combination of creative ambition, production complexity and purpose-driven commitments paved the way for their partnership with ERA.

AT A GLANCE

THE CHALLENGES

- Slow infrastructure provisioning
- Inconsistent support and growing operational risk
- Production delays caused by downtime
- High costs and limited flexibility
- Need to support a major office move

THE SOLUTIONS

- 300+ hosted remote workstations
- On-demand burst rendering
- Scalable storage and server infrastructure
- Seamless connectivity and LAN integration
- Direct access to expert engineers
- Rapid migration & relocation of eight racks of critical infrastructure

THE RESULTS

- Faster scaling and deployment
- Improved reliability and uptime
- Zero disruption during office relocation
- Simplified infrastructure management
- Greater flexibility for hybrid working
- Lower environmental impact

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CHALLENGES

As Blue Zoo continued to scale its production output, its infrastructure was no longer evolving at the same pace. The existing data centre and cloud environment introduced friction into day-to-day operations and limited the studio's ability to respond quickly to changing production demands.

- **Slow, Rigid Processes** – Routine infrastructure changes such as provisioning virtual machines involved lengthy approval processes, reducing agility for production teams.
- **Inconsistent Support** – Limited continuity and familiarity with Blue Zoo's environment led to slower issue resolution and increased operational overhead for internal teams.
- **Growing Operational Risk** – Over time, gaps in infrastructure management and resilience became apparent, raising concerns around reliability and security.
- **Pressure on Production Schedules at Risk** – Downtime and delays introduced risk at critical stages of production.
- **High Cost and Inflexibility** – Scaling resources required long lead times, advance bookings for professional services, and additional charges for out-of-hours support.

As productions became more complex and timelines tighter, it was clear Blue Zoo needed an infrastructure partner better aligned with the realities of modern animation pipelines.

WHY BLUE ZOO NEEDED TO CHANGE

Production schedules were intensifying, and a major office move was approaching that required a reliable, flexible remote workstation solution to ensure artists could continue working without disruption.

Flexible.Fast.Efficient

Blue Zoo needed a partner who could deliver:

- Fast turnaround times
- A deep understanding of animation pipelines
- A stable, secure infrastructure
- Flexible commercial terms
- Engineers who know their environment and work directly with them

The decision to move to ERA was reinforced by two key factors:

- Blue Zoo had already experienced the reliability of ERA's hosted workstations and connectivity services, which had consistently delivered when needed.
- ERA's pursuit of B Corp certification – When Blue Zoo learned that ERA was in the process of becoming a B Corp, it cemented their decision. Shared values and a commitment to responsible, sustainable business mattered deeply.

Today, with ERA now fully B Corp certified, that alignment remains central to the partnership.

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THE SOLUTION

ERA delivered a flexible, high-performance IaaS platform purpose-built for Blue Zoo's production workflows:

- **Hosted Workstations** – 300+ high-performance remote workstations enabling hybrid and distributed teams to work at full speed from anywhere.
- **Instant Burst Render Capacity** – Eliminating production congestion during peak periods.
- **Storage & Servers Across Two ERA Sites** – A scalable storage platform and a blend of ERA-hosted servers and Blue Zoo's own hardware optimised for animation, rendering and asset management.
- **Seamless Connectivity & LAN Integration** – Fast, secure connectivity allowing Blue Zoo to access their environment as if they were working locally.
- **Hands-on Support from Named Experts** – Direct access to engineers who understand their environment, with no layers of ticketing or outsourced escalation.
- **Rapid Deployment & Assisted Migration** – ERA engineers migrated Blue Zoo's entire server estate quickly and smoothly, at fair and transparent professional services rates with no long lead times and unnecessary bureaucracy.



"It feels like working with a team who genuinely understands our pipeline. ERA doesn't just provide infrastructure they guide us, advise us, and help us make the right technical decisions."

Alex Cornwell

Head of IT at **Blue Zoo**

HARDWARE RELOCATION SUPPORT

As part of the partnership, ERA was instrumental in supporting Blue Zoo through a complex infrastructure move. ERA planned and executed the relocation of eight racks of critical infrastructure, with all work completed outside core working hours and delivered in carefully staged phases to minimise risk.

The move was completed over four weekends, ensuring systems were fully operational by the time artists arrived for work each week. This approach allowed production to continue without disruption, demonstrating ERA's ability to manage high-risk, business-critical changes while protecting creative output.

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PROBLEMS SOLVED

The move to ERA didn't just relocate Blue Zoo's infrastructure, it removed many of the operational constraints that had previously slowed production and increased risk.

- **Immediate Increase in Reliability** – Critical systems, from render servers to production storage and hosted workstations became stable, secure and consistently available.
- **Reduced Administrative Overhead** – Infrastructure requests are handled quickly and directly, without lengthy approval chains.
- **Clear Predictable Costs** – No hidden fees with transparent pricing and the flexibility to scale resources around production cycles.
- **A True Partnership** – ERA acts as a trusted technical advisor, helping Blue Zoo make informed infrastructure decisions aligned with both production and business goals.

“With ERA everything just happens. If I say I need a VM, it's ready – no delays, no hoops to jump through. That responsiveness has completely changed how quickly we can move.” said Alex Cornell, Head of IT at Blue Zoo.

Alex Cornell Head of IT at **Blue Zoo**

THE IMPACT

ERA's solution delivered measurable improvements across Blue Zoo's production workflow:

- **Faster Scaling** during production peaks
- **Immediate Onboarding** of new artists and freelancers with zero hardware wait times.
- **Stronger Cross-team Collaboration** connecting episodic & film with digital growth, licensing, and development teams from anywhere.
- **Lower Environmental Footprint** thanks to shared cloud infrastructure and more efficient energy usage.
- **A more resilient pipeline** reducing downtime and increasing production reliability.

Blue Zoo can now deliver high-quality series and films more efficiently while maintaining the values that define their brand.



“The speed of delivery is incredible – what used to take weeks with our previous provider is ready in a day or two with ERA. And the level of service is unmatched; I always know I'm speaking to someone who understands our setup inside out.”

Alex Cornell

Head of IT at Blue Zoo

SUMMARY

By partnering with ERA, Blue Zoo gained a scalable, sustainable IaaS platform that supports their creative ambition and B Corp mission. The shared commitment to positive impact helped cement the partnership, ensuring Blue Zoo's infrastructure is as progressive and purpose-driven as their storytelling.



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