

Zoic Studios instantly mobilizes teams, increases security and creates a better studio environment

"Having the PColP protocol prevented us from losing two days of work during the last power outage... the rendering continued in the server room workstations which have UPS back up. As soon as the power came back on, the artists just turned their monitors on and resumed work. I didn't have a panic on my hands."

SAKER KLIPPSTEN
HEAD OF ENGINEERING
ZOIC STUDIOS



Zoic Studios is an award-winning visual effects post-production company that delivers high-end visual effects sequences and motion graphics for film, episodic TV, commercial, interactive web, and gaming. Zoic has a large studio in Culver City, California and another in Vancouver, British Columbia. Staff artists, producers, 2D and 3D editors and freelance artists use Maya, 3dsMax, NukeX, Mari, Hiero, Adobe CS, Avid, cineSync, and Microsoft Office applications.

AT A GLANCE

Challenge

- Constant moves of equipment for new project teams
- Stringent security requirements, including controlling USB access
- Simplifying IT support over multiple sites

Solution

- Teradici PColP Remote Workstation Cards in rack mount workstations and blade systems
- Zero clients with integrated Teradici PColP technology
- VMware Horizon View software client support on laptops and iPads

Results

- **Flexibility:** easily move people; not workstations
- **Better work environment:** less heat and noise
- **Increased security:** data never leaves the data center
- **Business continuity:** quick recovery from power outages
- **Cost savings:** reduced wiring requirements and lower overall costs for provisioning, installation, and maintenance

Harnessing the talent of creative teams is essential in the entertainment industry.

Artists, animators, producers and editors – regardless of where they're located – must work efficiently and effectively to truly innovate. Prior to deployment of a Teradici PCoIP Remote Workstation Solution, Zoic struggled with many of the challenges common to creative studios:

- Projects ramp up fast and lots of equipment must be moved.
- Apart from securing physical access to workstations in the studio, Zoic has to control USB access. Application licensing using hardware dongles was also problematic. Dongles would get lost or broken, rendering the application unavailable.

Efficiently managing IT support requirements over multiple sites with limited resources.

- Heat, noise, and overcrowding of desk-side workstations degraded working conditions.

Zoic had the opportunity to re-think their IT environment. “We had been looking for a solution that would allow us to move people around quickly and easily,” recalls Saker Klippsten, head of engineering at Zoic. “We looked at KVM technology (keyboard, video and mouse), but that didn't solve the problem. Someone at our office saw a Teradici PCoIP technology demo, so we purchased an evaluation kit.”

One of the trials involved long-distance remoting over the WAN. Saker took the PCoIP zero client to the Vancouver studio. The artists didn't know that the workstation was located in California. “They were pretty amazed because they couldn't tell the difference at all.”

The trials demonstrated that Teradici PCoIP technology could be used effectively in a studio environment with graphically demanding applications. Zoic could locate all their workstations in the computer room, thus keeping the data secure, and avoid having workstations in the studio area. Moves became a matter of simply assigning different workstation resources in the computer room.

Zoic decided on a mix of PCoIP workstation solutions, from Remote Workstation Cards in 1U rackmount workstations to complete blade systems. With the blade system, Saker is able to provide 14 workstations in a 7U rack space. Everyone benefits from the speed and high reliability that these server-class systems provide, and the same PCoIP silicon and firmware in each product ensures a consistent experience regardless of the chosen solution. Two Cat 6 cabling lines (one for a VoIP phone and the other for the PCoIP zero client) are run to each desk. Artists' work areas are equipped with PCoIP zero clients connected to multiple 24-inch monitors. Producers, accounting, and administration staff use VMware Horizon View and PCoIP with smaller monitors. Visiting staff members run VMware Horizon View soft clients on laptops and iPads. A VLAN ensures complete separation of visitors.

PCoIP technology enables Zoic Studios to instantly form and mobilize teams, securely and cost-effectively. Moving bulky workstations around has become a thing of the past. Artists love the fact that they can easily move from desk to desk, or go to someone else's desk to show them what's on their own workstation by simply logging into their own workspace.

Products used

Teradici PCoIP Remote Workstation Cards

PCoIP Zero Clients

VMware Horizon View

Zoic is growing fast and can now equip and assemble a new studio area in just two days. With only zero clients and monitors to connect, there's nothing under the desks. Workstations are now in the datacenter, reducing heat and noise in the studio, and improving the work environment and productivity. Artists using PCoIP zero clients don't lose work during power outages because the workstations in the server room have backup power. Applications continue to run, and no work is lost. The artists simply turn on their PCoIP zero clients once the power resumes.

Besides the flexibility and improved work conditions, the new remote workstation solution offers increased security. With PCoIP technology, Zoic ensures that the data never leaves the data center. Artists access applications and data remotely; only pixels are sent to the zero client on the desktop. PCoIP also enables total control of USB access, preventing unauthorized disclosure of confidential media and project details.

In terms of cost, PCoIP is less expensive to deploy and operate. Rather than three or four workstations per 20 Amp outlet, one outlet now provides enough power for 14 artists. This represents a considerable savings in re-wiring when project resources change, and reduces power consumption and cooling requirements in the studio. Simplified and standardized workstation components have also lowered IT costs. With PCoIP technology, the technical staff can troubleshoot, manage and update workstations from a centralized location without interruption.

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