



ASSEMBLAGE

At a Glance

Google Cloud Platform Results

- Scales quickly to take on new work
- Did not have to buy additional hardware or hire three to four engineers
- Lets staff focus on creative work, not back-end infrastructure

About Assemblage Entertainment

Assemblage is a Mumbai-based, full-service 3D animation and visual effects studio for interactive content development, visual imagery and production of high-quality CGI animation for full-length features, direct-to-home DVDs and television series.

None

Products Used

- [Google Cloud Storage](#)
- [Google Compute Engine](#)

Assemblage builds high-quality CGI animation studio using Google Cloud Platform

When a typhoon flooded the cloud platform facility that animation studio Assemblage was using remotely, the company needed new infrastructure to finish the current project. Assemblage turned to [Google Cloud Platform](#), which allows its designers, engineers and artists to better focus on designing high-quality interactive animated content.

Surviving a typhoon – a literal one

Mumbai-based [Assemblage](#) had a big idea in late 2013 when it was founded by AK Madhavan aka "Madmax" to become a major full-service 3D animation and visual effects studio. Creating high-quality animation and visual effects is a capital- and technology-intensive proposition, and the company needed to carefully watch its costs.

Assemblage credits itself with two feature film deliveries in record time: Norm of the North for Lionsgate USA for a worldwide theatrical release; and Blinky Bill for an Australian, European and limited North American release.

It initially chose a cloud platform based in China. Work went well until a typhoon flooded the provider's facility in October 2015. Assemblage was left without the processing power and storage it needed to finish an important project. The deadline for finishing the project was four weeks away, and its release date of January 2016 was at risk. So Assemblage turned to Google Cloud Platform for help. It migrated to GCP within days.

"What happened could have been a disaster for us, but we saw an opportunity to upgrade our infrastructure with Google Cloud Platform," says Madhavan, chief executive officer at Assemblage. "Moving to Google Cloud Platform was fast and simple – and it brought a photo-finish delivery of our project."

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One reason Assemblage was able to move to GCP in only four days, Madhavan adds, is that the company uses Linux, and “setting up Linux-based instances on Google was very straightforward.”

Products Used

- [Google Cloud Storage](#)
- [Google Compute Engine](#)

Lots of power for big projects

Animation rendering requires a great deal of computing power. But Assemblage’s needs vary greatly depending on the number of projects and the phases of those projects. Its requirements may skyrocket one day, and then fall back the following day. GCP’s per-minute pricing tracks with those needs, minute-by-minute.

“We may have very little need for rendering power, and then suddenly require hundreds of Linux instances,” says Madhavan.

Rather than purchase and maintain enough hardware to handle its peak usage, Assemblage uses Google Compute Engine, which allows it to scale up to the processing power it needs, and just as quickly scale down.

“With Compute Engine, we get the flexibility of using 16-core, 32-core and now 64-core machines whenever we need them,” Madhavan says. “We’re not limited by processing resources, and can take on any work we want without having to buy hardware. The most amazing part is we could scale up and down in minutes and without need of any technical professionals time. Production department could simply manage it with very little guidance which enabled a very efficient workflow.”

Animation files are extremely large, and on-site storage can be costly. Assemblage chose Google Cloud Storage for its ability to scale to handle any storage requirements.

Saving money and reducing time to market

Using GCP, Assemblage has grown to a staff of around 250 artists in a little more than two years since its launch, and takes on new



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Products Used

- [Google Cloud Storage](#)
- [Google Compute Engine](#)

projects without having to invest in unnecessary on-site infrastructure. It doesn't have to buy and maintain storage and additional hardware, leading to savings in capital expenses and engineering staff. If the company had maintained its own data farm, it would have had to hire at least three or four additional engineers, explains Madhavan.

Assemblage can now more quickly finish projects — and this speed-to-market can be a big differentiator in the competitive animation market. It completed two full-length animated feature films in two years, the Australian release Blinky Bill and Norm of the North, a

Lionsgate co-production that released in the US on January 15, 2016. During that time it also finished two direct-to-DVD productions. The studio is now busy working on a new slate of high-end feature film projects for a 3D stereoscopic theatrical release.

“Without Google Cloud Platform, if we had to scale up to take on new work, we would have had to spend time ordering new equipment, testing it and provisioning it before we could start. Now we can scale up and begin right away,” adds Madhavan.

GCP lets Assemblage focus its energy on creative work, rather than on handling infrastructure issues.

“We're in the business of entertainment in a very highly creative environment,” Madhavan says. “At heart I'm an artist trying to be a businessman. Google Cloud Platform lets us focus on what really propels us — creative work — rather than having to manage infrastructure!”