



“With a fully scalable, tiered and disaster recovery-aligned storage platform from Hitachi Data Systems, we’re confident we have the tools to support data and business growth while remaining economical.”

*Ryan Tunstall*  
 Vice President of Global IT Operations  
 HiT Entertainment

## HiT Entertainment

**INDUSTRY** Media

**SOLUTIONS** *Modular Storage, Business Continuity and Replication*  
**Hardware** — Hitachi Adaptable Modular Storage 2100 (2)  
**Software** — Hitachi Storage Navigator, Hitachi Replication Manager, Hitachi Tuning Manager, Hitachi Device Manager  
**Services** — Solution design and deployment consultancy provided by Hitachi Data Systems Global Solution Services and Hitachi TrueNorth™ Partner B2net



**HiT entertainment**

## HiT Entertainment Sets the Stage for a Creative Future with Hitachi Modular Storage

As the producer and licensor of some of the UK's most popular animated characters, HiT Entertainment has a large catalog of digital assets that must be kept safe and accessible. The company anticipates significant data growth in the coming years as it continues to produce new content and higher resolution CGI animation becomes more popular. It migrated from its mixed platform based on SAN and NAS technology to a scalable, tiered platform based on Hitachi Adaptable Modular Storage 2100 storage systems and replicated content between two sites. This means HiT is now fully equipped to support new content development while protecting data in case of an emergency.

HiT Entertainment is one of the world's leading producers and licensors of pre-school content with a portfolio comprising brands such as Thomas & Friends, Bob the Builder, Fireman Sam, Angelina Ballerina and Pingu. Its business spans the TV, home entertainment, consumer products, publishing, and live events and attractions markets.

The company creates a large number of popular TV programs every day. This means it faces a continuously growing body of content and data that must be kept safe. Over 120,000 individual assets, including large volumes of high resolution imagery, are an important component of

the organization's intellectual property, and HiT uses a digital asset management (DAM) system to hold its content and product approval processes.

As animation technology became more sophisticated, the large number of content files was putting a strain on the storage area network (SAN) that underpinned the DAM system. At the same time, extremely high resolution, computer generated imagery (CGI) graphics became increasingly popular among children, so the company created more of this sort of animation. This means that the average size of a single image has ballooned from 20MB

to 500MB or more over a relatively short period of time. With expectations of ongoing growth, HiT Entertainment needed to prioritize, ensuring its storage resources could cope.

### Hard Hitting Storage Demands

"Our business is delivering fresh and engaging content to our audiences and we need to know that we have the IT infrastructure in place to support this on a daily basis while keeping our data safe and accessible over time," explains Vice President of Global IT Operations at HiT Entertainment Ryan Tunstall. "Scalable capacity in our storage environment was essential, but data protection was also a key concern, so we had to have an architecture that would enable us to replicate data between our primary and secondary SANs."

The SAN and NAS hardware that the company had in place was reaching the end of its life, so HiT Entertainment chose to review potential replacement solutions by issuing a request for proposals (RFP). Its main evaluation criteria were replication capabilities and data tiering as the existing SAN did not allow the IT team to prioritize stored data in tiers. Tunstall and his team looked at seven different solutions with support from an independent consultancy to ensure the selected option met the organization's needs.



"The easy scalability of the modular storage solution means we know we can easily expand our resources in line with demand without affecting the business or placing strain on the IT team."

*Ryan Tunstall*  
Vice President of Global IT Operations  
HiT Entertainment

Senior Manager of Global Infrastructure James Herbert explains why HiT Entertainment decided on a solution provided by Hitachi Data Systems: “We’d received recommendations about Hitachi’s technology and approach, and had asked them to be involved in the RFP. B2net, a leading independent storage specialist, was already involved at this stage and managed the RFP response for the solution. We assessed cost-efficiency, global reach and support models for all the vendors we considered, and Hitachi Data Systems was strongest in all these areas. Throughout the RFP process the team we dealt with was extremely professional, and we built a very good relationship with them. We met with representatives in both the UK and the US, and the advice they gave us was always consistent. These things made it natural for us to choose the Hitachi and B2net solution.”

HiT Entertainment purchased two Adaptable Modular Storage 2100 systems, one to place in its UK data center and the other in New York. Remote connectivity between the two was provided using switches from QLogic, and a suite of Hitachi software was deployed to support replication, tiering management and capacity allocation across the virtualized storage infrastructure.

## Partners in Success

Consultants from Hitachi Data Systems Global Solution Services and experts from Hitachi TrueNorth™ Partner B2net managed configuration and deployment of the new solution. B2net analyzed the tender requirements, helped to develop the RFP response and then went on to provide ongoing project management throughout the deployment. The implementation was completed smoothly and relatively quickly, with the project going from design to live production in less than five months.

“The new technology meets our requirements in terms of functionality and is intuitive to use, too, so we’re able to manage it in house with ease,” comments Tunstall. “The SAN/NAS platform now supports diverse types of data across our whole global network, from our VMware virtual server environment to our three business critical applications.”

The company is now well positioned to handle future data growth while maintaining the high level of service and quality of content that its viewers have come to expect. “The performance of the new platform more than meets our needs,” says Herbert. “Initial tests also show it will be simple for us to replicate data between the two sites, covering us in case of an

emergency or any power outages. We’re looking forward to rolling out this feature in our production environment soon. Having said that, we’ve seen 100% availability so far, so we’re continuing to provide the platform needed to develop and broadcast some of the country’s favorite animated programs.”

Now, with the ability to tier its stored data, HiT Entertainment is able to manage its storage estate more economically. Resources are allocated to data depending on its importance to the business and how soon it is likely to be needed. This ensures that maintenance and management funds are allocated appropriately to ensure maximum efficiency. The small IT team at HiT Entertainment is able to control this allocation using Hitachi Tuning Manager software to ensure data can be shifted across tiers at any time.

“We plan to use Hitachi Data Systems as our storage partner for at least the next five years,” concludes Tunstall. “We know we can easily expand our resources in line with demand without affecting the business or placing strain on the IT team. At the same time, the strong support provided by Hitachi and B2Net means that we’re confident in the knowledge that should we ever have any problems or concerns, they’ll be there to help. As a fairly lean organization, we need to rely on our technology partners and we know we can depend on this partnership.”

 **Hitachi Data Systems Corporation**

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