



Boxel Studio Uses Splashtop To Enable Artists to Work Productively From Anywhere

Case Study



About Boxel Studio



Boxel Studio is a leading VFX and animation facility, based in Tijuana. It specializes in high-end solutions for the visual content industry. Dedicated to providing the best combination of photo-realism and the CG world, Boxel Studio creates memorable imagery, fusing technology and animation to connect with people and their stories.

Summary

Boxel Studio was determined to implement a flexible workplace for its employees to improve work-life balance, without compromising on productivity. After trying out multiple remote access solutions, Boxel Studio chose Splashtop to enable their artists to access high-end workstations and software remotely and work from anywhere, just as they would in the studio. Their IT team could also leverage the same platform to support workstations effectively, reducing manual work by 80%.

With Splashtop, Boxel Studio was able to increase employee satisfaction, while reducing costs and improving the productivity of its global workforce.

Andres Reyes, Chief Technology Officer at Boxel Studio shares his and his team's experience.

The Challenge: Finding a Secure, High-Performance Remote Access Solution

Boxel Studio initiated a protocol, even before the pandemic hit, called 'in-studio home office' that aims to enable employees to work from home without any compromise. The goal was to achieve a better work-life balance and give employees the flexibility of working from anywhere.

Boxel Studio uses a combination of both PCs and Macs. They have a very robust infrastructure and high-end workstations with more than 120 gigs of RAM, graphics cards like Quadro RTX 8000, and other hardware. These workstations run software like Maya, Nuke, the Adobe Suite, animation software like Toon Boom, modeling software like Modo, and many others.

The question on Reyes' mind was, "How can we allow our artists, collaborators, and other team members to work from home while accessing our secure infrastructure and specialized workstations?"

Reyes and his team tried out many remote access solutions. They found that although they were all very good, their focus seemed to be more on IT departments to provide remote support, rather than to deliver an enjoyable user experience. In some cases, the latency and video compression did not work for them. They also tried hardware-based solutions which had a high dependency on distance. So if the computer and artist were very far away from where they had to log into, they experienced very high latency.

Another important consideration was security. Boxel Studio has multiple certifications to work with big brand studios. The concern was that, for any reason, some of the content that they're working on gets stolen. Reyes explained, "In the media and entertainment industry, we're working with an intangible, digital, valuable piece of content that will eventually get distributed across theaters, traditional broadcast, cable or

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Andres Reyes
Chief Technology Officer
Boxel Studio

Splashtop, Inc.
www.splashtop.com

About Splashtop Enterprise

Splashtop Enterprise is an all-in-one remote access and remote support solution for organizations. High-performance remote sessions and a robust set of features enable productive remote work even for creatives who need to access high-end workstations and software. IT teams can easily deploy and manage secure remote access for employees and also effectively support workstations and employee devices.

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OTT (over-the-top) media services like Netflix, Amazon, Disney+, HBOMax, Paramount+, HULU.” They needed a remote access solution that would satisfy their security requirements and help them protect their data in a hybrid office setting.

While searching the web for options, Reyes and his team came across Splashtop. It had excellent reviews in forums and many other professionals were talking highly about it. So they gave Splashtop a try.

Reyes said, “The reason that Splashtop came to be our solution and on top is because it’s very well rounded and very well thought. It has a lot of powerful IT tools as well.”

Boxel Studio Finds Splashtop: An Easy-to-Use Solution with Robust Security and Superior UX

Boxel Studio employees can use their own personal computers to securely log in to remote high-end workstations using Splashtop. In the majority of the cases, employees are provided with a smaller system (a thin client, monitors, keyboard, mouse and tablet) that has the necessary capacity to connect remotely and leverage the studios high-end workstations.

Below are the main reasons why Boxel Studio chose Splashtop as their remote access technology partner:

Ease-of-use and user experience

Reyes said, “We always felt like you guys had a very robust user experience from the beginning, the trial, up until an actual acquisition of license. It’s just a blissful, no-hassle experience. It was so fast and easy to deploy Splashtop, just magic! Everything is easy - you need to add more users? Click click, super simple!” Reyes further said, “With the other solutions we tried, users were saying it’s too cluttered, it’s too slow, this is not what I wanted, and so on. We deployed Splashtop and immediately we’re getting emails from our artists - Wow, this is great, now I can really work, I can really get my job done. So you start getting that user satisfaction.”

Performance

With Splashtop, Boxel Studio experienced consistently fast connections and an almost no-compression feeling. Also, being cloud-based, the performance did not depend on the point-to-point distance of the user and remote computer. Andres said, “Our artists and producers have deadlines to meet with quotas of minutes of animation, frames to composite, models to finish. We wanted to figure out a way to increase productivity while balancing the work-life scenario. So for us, the fact that the artists would be able to work from home two days or three days a week, without impacting their deliverables, is a win!”

Security

Andres said, “I do want to stress this out - Splashtop is so secure! You have a back-end for the administrators that has two-factor authentication, you can go to users and allow them not to drag and drop files, put in a USB, copy-paste etc. Really, it’s super, super secure.”

Wacom tablet support

Boxel Studio artists leverage Splashtop’s ‘USB Device Redirection’ feature to use their own local Wacom pen tablet throughout the remote connection.

IT support capabilities

Initially, Boxel Studio was using Splashtop only for remote access. But when they upgraded to Splashtop Enterprise (from Splashtop Business Access Pro), they also got remote support capabilities. Andres said, “Splashtop Enterprise, and I’m not exaggerating, took 80% of our IT department’s manual workload.” Previously, the IT team had their own systems to manage workstations for the department – for modeling, rigging, animation, compositing, and so on. They manually managed all of those computers. With Splashtop Enterprise, they create images and groups, and digitally manage those computers. “Now they can actually manage and even schedule all updates for all computers on this date, at this hour. And boom, it gets irrigated to all of those computers. Splashtop has become THE maintenance platform for all workstations within the studio,” explained Reyes.

Customer service

Reyes said, “You have excellent support. You proactively called us - what else can we do to support you and make this experience better? We consider you guys our technology partner. You guys have made it very, very easy for us to have the best experience possible. We’re super happy about the type of support that Splashtop has provided us.”

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The Results – A Hybrid Office with Increased Profitability and Employee Satisfaction

Four months before the pandemic hit, Boxel Studio had already activated the ‘in-studio home office’ protocol and employees were working remotely. Reyes said, “We never stopped, even during the lockdown. We were able to fulfill the committed deadlines for productions that we already had going. The performance of the studio never dropped. It’s about consistency and business continuity, no matter which part of the world you are in.”

Before Splashtop, Boxel Studio was facing some challenges in recruitment. They had to pay expenses to relocate artists based in other parts of the world - India, Argentina, Spain, Italy, US , and Canada, and bring them all under the same roof. Now, they can offer contracts to people in any part of the world without having to spend relocation fees. Those savings are transferred to artists and collaborators. Reyes concluded, “We are now able to offer better salaries because some of those savings (from relocation expenses) can be spread across the workforce. Here’s where I see a lot of efficiencies achieved with Splashtop.”

Boxel Studio successfully implemented a productive, flexible workplace with increased employee satisfaction and cost savings, with Splashtop.