

# Halo Case Study Brief

## DreamWorks: The Availability of Resources



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## Who is DreamWorks?

Launched in October 1994 by Steven Spielberg, Jeffrey Katzenberg and David Geffen, DreamWorks SKG is a leading producer of live-action motion pictures, animated feature films, network and cable television programming, home video and DVD entertainment and consumer products.

Under the leadership of Mr. Katzenberg, DreamWorks Animation has grown into a computer-generated (CG) animation studio with multiple production locations across several continents. In 2001 DreamWorks released *Shrek*, which skyrocketed to record box office success and won the first-ever Academy Award for Best Animated Feature Film. *Shrek2*, released in 2004, broke box office records to become not only the number one animated film of all time, but also the third highest grossing film ever. *Shark Tale*, also released in 2004, is the first entirely CG animated feature ever created in Southern California. Its release made DreamWorks the first studio ever to release two CG films in one year. *Madagascar*, DreamWorks' last CG animated release, grossed over \$525 million in worldwide box office, one of the top films of 2005.

## DreamWorks' business situation/need

In 2001, working to fulfill the goal of two animated releases per year, DreamWorks put together an aggressive slate of movies, which included the movies *Shrek2* and *Madagascar*.

The task was enormous; it takes three years to complete an animated movie and the talent availability is extremely limited. Directors and producers are quickly recruited by other studios prior to the completion of a movie. And only a handful of individuals have the expertise and experience to create a CG film.

Following on the enormous success of *Shrek*, DreamWorks faced the difficulty of staffing their *Shrek2* production. Andrew Adamson, the Director of the original *Shrek*, had already committed to another project in Los Angeles when DreamWorks started work on *Shrek2* in the fall of 2001. With the distance between Glendale and Redwood City equivalent to an LA-to-San Francisco trip, it looked like DreamWorks might have to fall back to another director who could be in the Bay Area frequently. The problem was solved by creating an edit/approval system using Halo technology.

The availability of resources also challenged the production of *Madagascar*. Key groups, such as story, animation, and production management were literally distributed across geographically remote sites (Glendale and Redwood City). In order to achieve the best movie possible, a production pipeline was established to capitalize on the strengths of each site as well as to share limited resources and talent. The result—*Madagascar*—was one of the highest grossing films of 2005.

## The HP Halo + DreamWorks solution

Using HP Halo Virtual Collaboration technology on each end to tie the Glendale and Redwood City teams together, DreamWorks was able to speed up almost every aspect of *Shrek2* production. Andrew Adamson could be in a Halo room in Glendale working with members of the team in Redwood City. Jeffrey Katzenberg, who is involved in the many facets of film production, did not have to live on a plane to sync up with the *Shrek2* crew.

For *Madagascar*, storyboards could be developed in Glendale and shared with members of the team in Redwood City without losing any of the excitement and drama of the presentation. Color-critical artwork could be approved between the two sites using color-

calibrated high-resolution HP platforms. Using the Halo rooms, the technical foundation (thousands of lines of programming code) that brings a CG character to life was shared by each site.

## What did that mean for DreamWorks?

HP's Halo Virtual Collaboration Studio not only helped DreamWorks compress its production schedule for Shrek2, it made it possible for the studio to marshal the best talent available and bring them together, in every way except physically, to produce the highest grossing animated film ever. Shrek2 was the fastest film ever to earn \$400 million at the U.S. box office (in just 43 days), after enjoying the highest grossing opening weekend of 2004, the largest 5-day Wednesday opening ever, and the largest 4-day Memorial Weekend ever. For Madagascar, the result was a box office hit.

Among other things, the Halo VCS enabled DreamWorks to:

- Leverage the talent available at geographically remote sites without the need for travel
- Eliminate the lost productivity of traveling to solve problems
- Schedule and easily reschedule meetings if participants needed to go back to the drawing board
- Forego schlepping artwork and other physical objects back and forth to gain approvals
- Develop and leverage resources by mentoring at a distance rather than by getting on a plane

According to Jeffrey Katzenberg, "Halo rooms change your reason for flying. You travel to maintain relationships; not to do work."

## For more information

[www.hp.com/halo](http://www.hp.com/halo)

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