



Case Study: IDL Worldwide

Global Consumer Experience Agency Streamlines Collaboration and Accelerates Project Delivery

Retail branding firm IDL Worldwide designs unique customer experiences for an impressive client list, including Coca-Cola, Nickelodeon, Chick-fil-A, and The North Face. A division of branding giant Matthews International, IDL doesn't function like a traditional agency. The firm takes projects all the way from initial sketches and whiteboarding through design and deployment, like the seasonal North Face "Outpost" areas that IDL designed and installed in more than 600 Dick's Sporting Goods locations.

When IDL's legacy file server and backup infrastructure could no longer support the needs of the business, the firm turned to Nasuni Cloud File Services™ and Amazon Simple Storage Service (Amazon S3).

Business and IT Challenges

IDL has been expanding rapidly, and the company's 5-year plan includes growing from 3 brand studios to 5, setting up virtual teams across the U.S., and vertically integrating its design-to-build model. However, IDL didn't have the collaboration infrastructure to support its unique, end-to-end value proposition.

The firm organized a week-long, internal Kaizen Event – a Six Sigma tool designed to optimize processes – that brought together key players from project management, design, pre-press, manufacturing, IT and other teams.

David Cottman, IDL's Manager of Graphics Solutions, says the event revealed a number of strategic and internal issues. "We had to figure out what fits both IT and business needs and look at the long-term strategy. How can we sustain a system

IDL Worldwide

Summary

Cloud File Services: Nasuni

Cloud Storage: Amazon S3

Capacity: 50 TB

Locations: 4

Key Applications: Adobe Creative, Microsoft Office

Use Cases:

- File server consolidation
- ROBO file storage
- Cloud backup
- Multi-site file collaboration

Benefits:

- Unlimited file storage
- 50% reduction in primary storage costs
- Elimination of NAS refreshes and data migrations
- Improved design team productivity

that helps us grow? What if we have to fire up a new office in a new location? We're looking to expand into new markets. How can we do that efficiently?"

The event showed that users were storing Adobe Creative Cloud application files, video, audio, and CAD project files on laptops, file servers in multiple offices, and other hard-to-track locations. On a given project, focused creative teams made up of graphic designers, artisans, copywriters, 3D visualization groups, photographers, builders, and craftsmen – often based in many different locations – work together. To collaborate, these teams were using a complex mix of file transfer solutions, including Aspera, Mass Transit, and FTP, along with local file servers, Dropbox, and private network bandwidth. In some cases, IDL would store 20+ copies of a single 1 GB file.

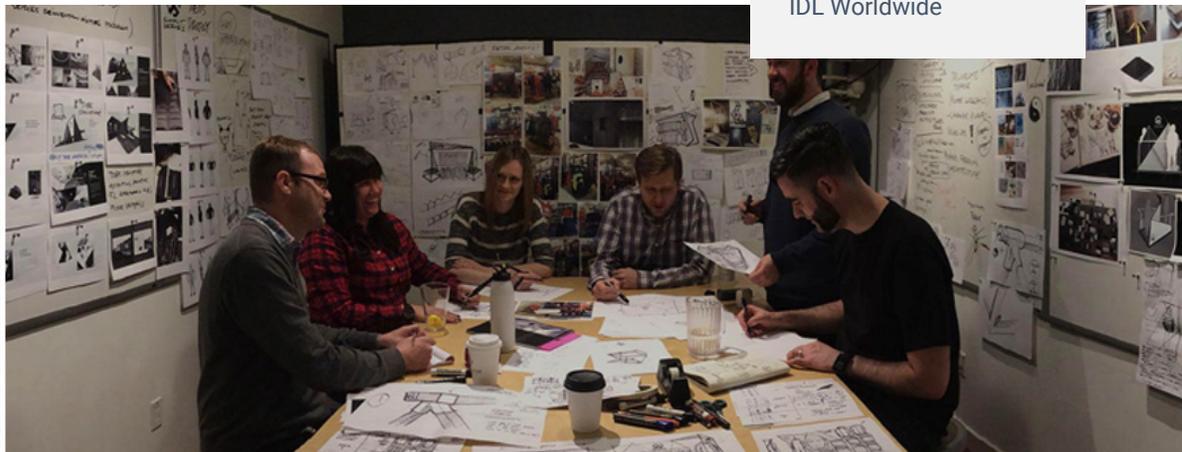
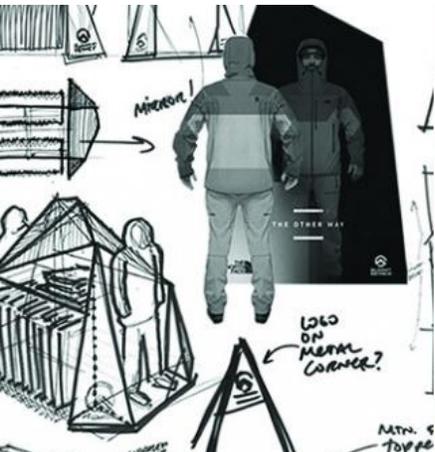
"When our IT group did an audit on our Portland server, we had 40% duplicate files," Cottman explains. "That's eating up space and hardware costs. We got tired of every six months saying we need more disk space or we need another 4 TBs."

Eventually, IDL identified a few critical requirements. Foremost among them was the need for a new, more efficient collaboration workflow that supports future company growth.

Says Cottman, "We asked ourselves some key questions. How do we have designers in Pittsburgh and Portland work on the same project and have access to the exact same files? How can we eliminate the redundancies of multiple files all over the place? How can we make it easy for new employees to use this system? And how do we make it easy and cost-effective for IT to implement and manage?"

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Solution

The answer was a strategy called "SkyBox" that includes an overhauled file infrastructure, plus company-wide training and system documentation. After extensive evaluations, IDL built its SkyBox implementation around Nasuni Cloud File Services and Amazon S3, with Nasuni's patented UniFS® global file system uniting all users and locations with shared file access.

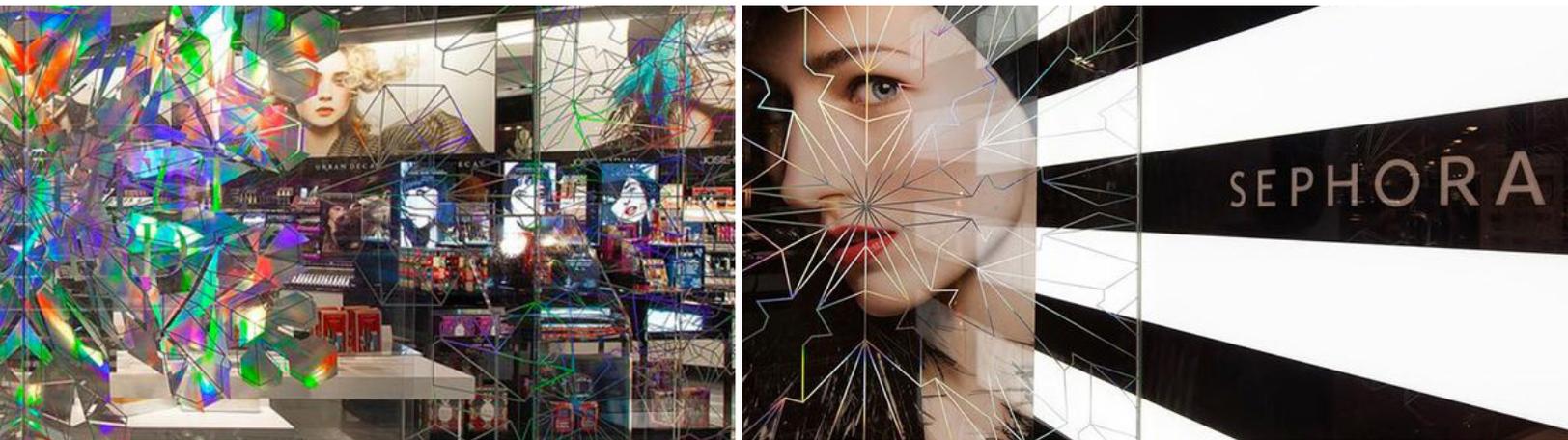
UniFS stores the gold copies of all files and metadata in Amazon S3, while caching only actively used files on Nasuni Edge Appliances in each location. This "cache-from-cloud" architecture dovetails perfectly with IDL's goals, as it extends fast, secure access to the most recent versions of design and creative files to all locations, without the need for

expensive, full-sized file servers or NAS devices. Files are securely propagated to Amazon S3 from the Edge Appliance where they are produced, then securely synchronized to other Edge Appliances in other sites using public internet links.

Since UniFS is based in Amazon S3, it is free of the capacity constraints of legacy file infrastructure or even cloud solutions that store all metadata on full-sized storage devices. As a result, IDL no longer needs to worry about running out of space. Yet, Nasuni is highly space-efficient. Built-in de-duplication and compression means the days of 20+ versions of the same file are gone. Additionally, caching only the active files at each location reduces the storage footprint in each office up to 80%

Once IDL's line of business and IT architects designed the Nasuni-based SkyBox solution, the firm established a plan to ensure its success and standardization across the company, then brought in key players from each department to ensure buy-in.

"We decided how we were going to set up our file system so everyone was working out of the same folder structure," explains Cottman. "We set up strict permissions and rules around this, so an account manager will have access to the project management folder with read-write access, but manufacturing might have read-only access. Project management, IT, and security all collaborated to make sure this was set up properly, so we have a true global file server that gives every worker the resources they need."



Results

Nasuni and Amazon S3 are now delivering transformative results across IDL's offices.

Accelerated Project Delivery

With IDL's previous file infrastructure, so many files were created the firm wasn't always sure its designers and clients were seeing or working on the latest version. Now, a single gold copy of each file resides in Amazon S3, and that frequently updated gold copy is cached by Nasuni at high speed in any location. This is saving IDL's creative teams a tremendous amount of time, is facilitating quicker back-and-forth reviews with clients, and is generally enabling projects to be completed 50% faster.

Comments Cottman, "We're giving time back to our employees. To be able to work in a collaborative space like this, they're not wasting an extra hour or hour and a half each day

searching for files, deleting files to free up space, trying to get back older versions, or waiting for files to be transferred to their location. That time adds up.”

Streamlined Workflow with Clients and Partners

Nasuni’s global file system, which uses faster and more affordable internet bandwidth – not MPLS – to synchronize only the tiny fragments of files that change across all locations, has given IDL a shared collaborative workspace that works both internally and externally.

“The way Nasuni works,” Cottman explains, “we can set up a shared folder that clients and external vendors can access through the Web, so now we can collaborate out of the same project folder and truly work as a team.”

Better Balance Between IT and Business Needs

Like many enterprises, IDL has to find the balance between what its business units need and what IT can afford. The designers want the best tools possible to get their work done as efficiently as possible. Yet, IT must work within its budget. With Nasuni and Amazon S3, both groups are getting what they need.

Says Cottman, “We are giving our creative teams the resources they need to securely collaborate with each other and our clients. At the same time, we’re shifting work off IT’s plate by eliminating the need for many of the previous file storage, file transfer, remote access, backup, and DR tools.”

Easy Expansion to New Locations

As IDL opens new offices, it is looking for ways to improve efficiency and control costs. Nasuni’s global file system is ideal for this expansion. To integrate its new facility in Baltimore, for example, IDL simply added a 4 TB Nasuni Edge Appliance to cache the active files from Amazon S3. The new location was fully deployed in less than a day – not the 60-90 days required previously – and now has fast access to the most recent versions of files without MPLS.

“In the future, as we grow and scale and go into other markets, we’re only looking at a 2-6 TB Nasuni appliance, depending on what kind of work we’re going to be doing,” Cottman adds. “We can have limited hardware resources in those locations but still give our project teams and our clients fast access to project files.”

More Efficient Resource Sharing Between Offices

IDL has 3D rendering teams in Pittsburgh and Portland, Oregon. Nasuni’s global file system enables both locations to connect to the same shared volume in Amazon S3. If the rendering farm in Pittsburgh is overworked, the creative team in that office can use the one in Portland to process their visualizations.

Standardized Collaboration Tools

The firm sought one efficient and secure way to facilitate collaboration between creative teams, clients, and vendors on all files, of all sizes, including Word documents, Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop files, 3D visualizations, and high-res images. As a file system



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without physical hardware limits, UniFS stores and synchronizes files of any type, number or scale. This standardized approach to file sharing makes it easier for new employees to get up to speed quickly, since they don't need to familiarize themselves with multiple tools, shared drives, and volumes.

Lower IT CapEx and OpEx

The capital costs of file infrastructure and the operational costs of managing it have been drastically reduced by the Skybox initiative.

"Explains Cottman, "Because of Nasuni and Amazon S3, we're doing away with the yearly support and service contracts of our previous file storage systems. Backup software maintenance is reduced. Secure FTP costs go away. All the different Dropbox accounts go away. It just really is a huge savings overall - not just the hard IT savings, but the IT time savings as well."

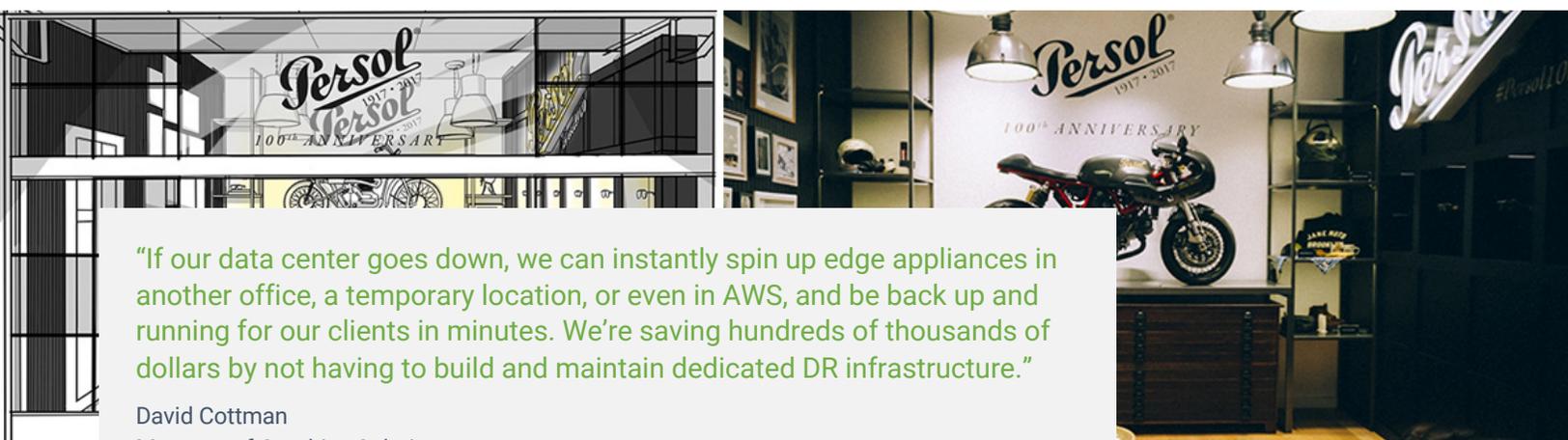
Simple Restores & Built-In DR

Tight recovery points and recovery times were a requirement. Nasuni delivers on that front as well. Nasuni Continuous File Versioning™ technology constantly stores the tiny fragments of files that change in Amazon S3, creating an unlimited version history of every file.

Explains Cottman, "With Nasuni, we know all our files and file versions are safe in Amazon S3, so whenever someone loses a file, we can bring it back. If we lose an edge appliance in Pittsburgh, we're only losing cached data. The files can be brought up on another appliance in Pittsburgh or any other location. Users can also do recoveries themselves. That makes IT's life easier."

Nasuni's cloud architecture, together with Amazon S3, also protects IDL against larger-scale disasters.

Says Cottman, "If our data center goes down, we can instantly spin up edge appliances in another office, a temporary location, or even in AWS, and be back up and running for our clients in minutes. Plus we're saving hundreds of thousands of dollars by not having to build and maintain dedicated DR infrastructure."



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Next Steps

The benefits of the Nasuni-powered SkyBox project are being seen across the organization, freeing up IT time and resources for strategic projects, facilitating collaboration between creative teams and their clients and contractors, and saving the firm money at multiple levels. Generally, Nasuni and Amazon S3 are helping IDL utilize all its distributed resources – human and computer – all the time.

As IDL continues to grow its business and build unique customer experiences, its modern file infrastructure based on Nasuni and AWS will facilitate that growth – not slow it down.

Summarizes Cottman, “We only wish we would have done this a year and a half earlier.”

About Nasuni

Nasuni provides the first multi-cloud platform that enables enterprises to store, protect, synchronize, and collaborate on unstructured file data as it transitions from actively used to inactive. Powered by Nasuni’s patented UniFS® global file system, Nasuni Cloud File Services™ stores all files in private or public cloud object storage, caches active files wherever fast access is needed, and automatically correlates what customers pay with the frequency of data access. By consolidating Network Attached Storage (NAS), file server, backup, archiving, disaster recovery, and file synchronization capabilities in one scalable platform that spans the data center and the cloud, Nasuni improves workforce productivity, simplifies IT operations, and reduces IT costs. The world’s largest companies in 12 industry sectors rely on Nasuni to maximize the business value of their file data and ensure business continuity. Nasuni is based in Boston, USA.

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