Leaving Boxes Behind
Ubisoft found a CDN partner, with Akamai, to match its business model.

Company: Ubisoft
Industry: Media & Entertainment
Country: France
Website: www.ubisoft.com

Key Results:
• Real-time digital inventory
• Better cost control through new billing model
• Growth path for the future
As Director of Online Services, Kevin Clark needed to safely guide Ubisoft through a fundamental industry transition. As gamers moved away from store-bought packaged products in favor of downloading direct from the developer, Kevin and his team needed to ensure Ubisoft could meet the now-instant expectations of its player community.

Eliminating FOMO
Fear Of Missing Out on the initial experience with a new game is a real issue. Gamers want to join their friends in being among the first to play. If this short window is missed, they may not buy a new game at all. But instead of waiting at dawn for the retail store to open, customers would now all simultaneously rush to Ubisoft’s site to download multi-GB files at the moment of availability. Compounding this issue was the need to deliver games on a worldwide basis. If a spike were to overwhelm the system, Kevin would have some explaining to do.

Technology … of Course. But There’s More
Prior to selecting Akamai, Ubisoft was working with a different CDN, which was falling behind. Akamai outshone the incumbent as a best-of-breed provider with a global presence and the ability to continually push the technology envelope. There was little doubt

Akamai’s infrastructure could handle the traffic — even under the most demanding load. With Akamai, Kevin was sure Ubisoft could meet gamers’ expectations of immediate access to new releases. But that was only part of the equation. Only with Akamai were Kevin and his team able to solve several thorny business issues that were hurting Ubisoft.

Navigating Through “Dark Places”
Ubisoft’s inventory is its game files. Prior to working with Akamai, all Kevin would know is how many files of a certain size were downloaded by players. There was no way to determine which specific files were accessed — essentially, which games were selling and where? Was Assassin’s Creed or Far Cry purchased? The unknown challenge of integrating the CDN with internal financial/ERP systems was one such “dark place” Kevin’s team needed to resolve. And this went way beyond providing fast download speeds.

With Akamai, we were able to solve business issues other providers wouldn’t even consider.

Kevin Clark
Director of Online Services, Ubisoft
Akamai was the only partner Kevin could find to help. Akamai’s services and custom consulting capabilities were instrumental. Today, Kevin is able to provide Ubisoft’s management with a real-time digital inventory. At any moment, Ubisoft knows which games are selling, providing a clear financial picture, as well as the ability to adapt its go-to-market strategy accordingly.

**Matching the Business Model**

Kevin found other CDNs rigid in their pricing structure — only offering an on-demand model that charged extra for surges in volume. This meant Ubisoft was being penalized for the nature of its traffic. Ubisoft was often hit by unexpected ancillary charges, hurting the bottom line. Kevin was able to get Akamai to understand the issue and its financial impact. In response, Akamai developed a new billing model based on total yearly bandwidth. As a result, Kevin could deliver lower, more predictable costs while still providing the capacity Ubisoft’s customers demanded.

**Room to Grow**

With more cutscenes, expansive audio, and greater visual texture, file sizes continue to grow. But with Akamai, Kevin and his team are confident they will meet this challenge. More importantly, when new problems arise — even those beyond traditional CDN concerns — Kevin and his team have a partner they can work with to find the answer.

As the world’s largest and most trusted cloud delivery platform, Akamai makes it easier for its customers to provide the best and most secure digital experiences on any device, anytime, anywhere. Akamai’s massively distributed platform is unparalleled in scale with over 200,000 servers across 130 countries, giving customers superior performance and threat protection. Akamai’s portfolio of web and mobile performance, cloud security, enterprise access, and video delivery solutions are supported by exceptional customer service and 24/7 monitoring. To learn why the top financial institutions, e-commerce leaders, media & entertainment providers, and government organizations trust Akamai please visit www.akamai.com, blogs.akamai.com, or @Akamai on Twitter. You can find our global contact information at www.akamai.com/locations.

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