



## Square Enix, Inc.

### Top-Selling Game Manufacturer Uses ClearCube for Quality Assurance Testing

## SQUARE ENIX



As developer and distributor of top-selling video games like Final Fantasy® and Dragon Quest®, Square Enix is a world leader in digital entertainment. The Tokyo-based company hosts one of the most popular sites for online gaming and is Japan's second largest manufacturer of role-playing games.

Square Enix, Inc. is a wholly owned subsidiary of Square Enix Co. Ltd. and has offices located in Los Angeles, CA and Seattle, WA. The company handles the development, localization, marketing and publishing of Square Enix titles in North America.

#### The Challenge

The quality assurance department at Square Enix's Los Angeles location uses a multitude of equipment to test outgoing games before distribution. After downloading and burning raw graphic images from Japan, QA testers play through each game using one of several gaming platforms. Any malfunctions found in the program are documented in an international database.

"The accumulation of equipment in the QA department was causing major spacing issues," says Anthony Salazar, manager of network services. "When you have twenty people on a table, and each one has a Playstation, Xbox, PC, keyboard and mouse, it can get crowded pretty quickly."

The box PCs bore the brunt of the overcrowding. "People would spill drinks on their PCs, trip over the wires, step on things—it was a mess. Hardware would sometimes disappear, too," says Salazar.

PC maintenance and availability was also a nightmare. User-related accidents and system downtime required the company's technicians to focus endless hours on desktop support. "Resolving hardware issues took a big chunk out of our resources," says Salazar. "Basic PC maintenance used to take so much time, it wasn't even funny."

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**"The overhead of maintaining a box PC environment was expensive. The ClearCube solution has really saved us a lot of money."**

— Anthony Salazar,  
Manager of Network Services  
Square Enix

#### OVERVIEW

##### ► The Challenge

Reduce space requirements and improve asset manageability in a cramped QA department

##### ► The Solution

Replace box PCs with centralized PC Blades and cable-connected User Ports

##### ► The Benefit

A more accommodating work environment with higher system availability and fewer desktop support requests

#### The Solution

To alleviate spacing and maintenance issues, Square Enix replaced all the box PCs in its quality assurance department with ClearCube PC Blades and small user-facing connection devices. "Now there's only the monitor, keyboard and mouse at the testers' desks. There's nothing else to mess with," says Salazar.

ClearCube Technology removes the box PC from the user work area, condenses it into a fully Intel® compatible PC Blade form-factor, and rack-mounts it in a centralized data center. All that remains at the user work

area are the peripherals and a small device called a ClearCube User Port that provides Ethernet, fiber or cable connectivity.

Applications and data are stored and processed directly on the PC Blades, and User Ports do not contain any mass storage devices like disk or CD drives. IT administrators can also use the web browser-based ClearCube Management Suite (CMS) to remotely manage users and PC Blades from anywhere in the world.

## The Benefit

In addition to clearing up the testers' work areas, the ClearCube solution also improved system availability and manageability. If a tester encounters an IT issue, an administrator can now instantly "hot swap" the user to a spare PC Blade and then perform repairs as needed. Installations, upgrades and moves/adds/changes are also easier to execute since

the PC Blades are housed in a centralized location.

"My staff loves the solution to death," says Salazar. "They just set up or fix the Blades in the data center, and they're done. They don't have to go around the office toying with users' keyboards, drivers, or anything else."

Salazar says the QA department is now the quietest part of the office as far as desktop support is concerned. "QA testers are normally pretty computer savvy since they game so much, but we haven't received a single complaint about the new system. Issues are rare."

In addition to eliminating PC-related noise and heat in the QA department, the centralized solution has also hardened the company's asset security. "The hardware is safer now that we can lock it down in the data center," says Salazar.

Impressed by the superior reliability and manageability of the ClearCube solution, Salazar has expressed a desire to expand the deployment in the future. "I'd love to get rid of the box PCs in the game support call center and replace them with Blades. ClearCube's worked really well for us."

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**"It's hard to be proactive when you're fixing broken computers all the time. ClearCube has made a huge difference in this respect. The centralization and hot swapping of the Blades means that we don't have to be so reactionary any more."**

**— Anthony Salazar,  
Manager of Network Services  
Square Enix**

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