



EQUINIX CUSTOMER CASE STUDY

BLADE GROUP



Cloud-based gaming company re-architects its infrastructure for a digital edge, while leveraging the power of interconnection to facilitate global expansion

Business results

- Reduced latency to less than 16ms
- Optimized costs and performance
- Gained a reliable partner with a global footprint
- Improved scalability with interconnection solutions
- Obtained access to multiple telecom and internet operators
- Established an IT framework for seamless global replication

Executive overview

Blade was created to design and develop a new type of cloud computers with a simple vision: to move all of a computer's components into a data center, to be accessed anywhere via a simple internet connection. Thanks to improved network quality and the widespread deployment of fiber optic in France and across the world, what seemed impossible just a few years ago is now a reality.

Today, following three rounds of fundraising, the company has sold its solution to 5,000 customers, with more than 20,000 on their waiting list. Blade had its sight set on international expansion, aiming to reach 100,000+ users by the end of 2018. To help support its expansion goals, Blade turned to Equinix.

Customer overview

Founded in Paris in 2015 by three entrepreneurs, Blade set a challenge to develop Shadow, the PC of the future. Shadow is an always-up-to-date PC that can be used everywhere, on any device with an internet connection. Present in France and soon to arrive in Germany, the UK and the U.S., Blade released Shadow one year ago, convinced that the gaming market would be the fastest-growing in the years to come, and the founders weren't wrong. In 2016, the video games market exceeded its 2008 all-time record, reaching €3.46 billion from both hardware sales (consoles, PC gaming, accessories) and games. And across the world, the industry exceeded €30 billion dollars for the first time.

Business opportunity

According to Blade, meeting the needs of 20,000 customers was relatively easy. However, the company had a goal to multiply its users by 10x and launch in several other countries, while maintaining optimal quality of service.

Since Blade understood the complexity of drastically increasing its users in the world of online gaming, the company was aware of its time-sensitive challenges, including the input of commands, processing images, encoding and decoding, and the distance between the user and data center. With a top objective to improve performance for its online gamers, the company was challenged to provide <16ms latency to reduce lag—a noticeable delay between the action of players and the reaction of the server in a video game.



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“Thanks to Equinix, the company is now ready to expand abroad and meet the needs of the millions of gamers who will be able to discover Shadow.”

Stéphane Héliot, Co-founder, Blade

To resolve its business challenges and anticipate the rise of this market, Stéphane Héliot, Blade Co-founder, wanted to find a reliable global partner with a versatile data center hosting and interconnection platform. It needed a partner capable of working alongside the Blade Group that offered sustainable and scalable solutions, while enabling expansion in different parts of the world.

After a thorough selection process, Blade selected Equinix to achieve the double objective of growth and performance based on a few key factors: strong international presence, especially in the United States; quality of its infrastructure, both scalable and secure; concentration of numerous telecoms operators and network platforms, including Equinix Internet Exchange; and interconnection opportunities to achieve the lowest latency possible in the online gaming industry.

Solution

The first part of the solution began with Blade relocating its new servers within Equinix PA1 Paris International Business Exchange™ (IBX®) data center in Roissy, less than 20 miles from the center of Paris. Within PA1, the company re-architected its infrastructure for the digital edge by leveraging an interconnection-first approach, deployed on Platform Equinix® to gain access to multiple telecom and internet providers, optimize connectivity and boost performance.

During the four-month migration process, 300 computer bays were installed, and Blade now has an interconnected framework that can be replicated at different scales within other Equinix data centers around the world. Finally, during the standardization of service phase, Blade selected manufacturers and made all the technological decisions to plan the large-scale deployment of its solution.

Value added

Since the Equinix Paris campus brings together 355 interconnection providers and allows collaboration with more than 1,000 operators from around the world, it empowers Blade to obtain the lowest latency in the online gaming industry.

With Equinix, Blade has access to the most innovative technology. The company is eagerly awaiting the arrival of 5G, which will enable them to exceed 30 Mbps of throughput with less than 5ms latency. “Thanks to Equinix, the company is now ready to keep up with growing demand to meet online and mobile gaming needs,” says Héliot.

Key take-aways

To quantify application performance, Blade created a dedicated test platform in Silicon Valley. The testing determined that with Equinix, Blade can now provide the same quality of service to its user up to 1,243 miles (2,000 km) from the data center in Palo Alto. “We have a transport capacity of 400 Gbps in IP coming from two telecom suppliers and for the test platform in Silicon Valley. With Equinix, we also established two 10 Gbps connections,” explains Yannis Weinbach, Marketing Director, Blade.

About Blade

Founded in Paris by three entrepreneurs, Blade set a challenge to develop Shadow, the PC of the future. In 2017, the company has 70 employees and has completed its third fundraising campaign, reaching one of the highest french tech campaign figures of 2017 with €51 million. www.blade-group.com/

About Equinix

Equinix, Inc. (Nasdaq: EQIX) connects the world's leading businesses to their customers, employees and partners inside the most interconnected data centers. In 44 markets across five continents, Equinix is where companies come together to realize new opportunities and accelerate their business, IT and cloud strategies. In a digital economy where enterprise business models are increasingly interdependent, interconnection is essential to success. Equinix operates the only global interconnection platform, sparking new opportunities that are only possible when companies come together.

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