

Blazing-fast Connectivity Powers Direct-to-gamer Video Game Development



Measures of Success:

- High-speed Fiber Internet connectivity for enabling “direct-to-the-gamer” development
- The bandwidth for accessing cloud resources for real-time collaboration
- Network reliability for streamlining artistic collaboration *and* business operations
- Fiber Internet Access (FIA) for securing highly confidential intellectual property

After developing the blockbuster video games *Wing Commander* and *Freelancer*, Chris Roberts spent 10 years in Hollywood making movies. “But games were part of my DNA,” he says, and as the Internet and computer processing power evolved, he saw the opportunity to create not just a new game but an entirely new way of funding and developing it.

In 2012, Roberts founded Cloud Imperium Games (CIG) and launched development of *Star Citizen* using crowd funding from fans eager to participate in shaping the new game. CIG chose to work with Spectrum Enterprise to equip its US development studios with ultra high-speed Internet.

High-speed connections to the cloud and to gamers

Today, CIG’s Austin and Los Angeles studios each have 1 Gbps Fiber Internet Access (FIA) fiber circuit. This blazing speed and capacity is enabling CIG to bypass the traditional funding and retail development process by engaging players directly in creating the movie-quality gaming world of *Star Citizen*.

Through word of mouth, gamers discover *Star Citizen*’s online community where they can invest in the game, talk in chat rooms and share real-time feedback with Roberts and his developers. This engagement keeps the fan base growing while development continues. Crowdfunding continues as well, with fan-generated investments at almost \$90 million as of August 2015.

A disruptive model for video game development

What Roberts is doing with his small company is disruptive. Traditionally, the industry has been dominated by large publishers who can afford the risk of spending years developing games behind closed doors and then launching them with a retail model that requires manufacturing boxes, printing discs and shipping games to stores. “But,” Roberts explains, “with the advent of a more digital world and [fiber-optics] broadband from Spectrum Enterprise [CIG can] plug content directly into the audience and bypass that traditional retail channel... It means we’re viable with a smaller audience.”

Client Profile:

- Company:** Cloud Imperium Games
Industry: Video Game Development
Services: Fiber Internet Access (FIA)



Chris Roberts, Chairman and CEO, Cloud Imperium Games

“We’re blazing new ground... We wouldn’t be able to do that without stable, reliable and fast Internet. That’s what TWCBC (TWCBC is now Spectrum Enterprise) has given us.”

—Chris Roberts



The profit margins of direct-to-gamer development free CIG to focus on developing a single game. This enables developers to pivot and deploy new content quickly to the audience. “The tools that allow us to be quicker and more flexible are very important. The TWCBC* [solution] is a big part of that,” Roberts says.

Attracting top developers

Dedicated gigabit high-speed Internet connectivity has also been instrumental in CIG’s ability to recruit exceptionally talented developers. With studios in California, Texas, Germany and the UK, Roberts says “embracing the 21st-century online work style allows us to have better people... We have some really good developers who can’t move to Austin or Los Angeles, and they’re still part of the team.”

In addition to providing developers with world-class collaboration and video development tools, IT Director Mike Jones says CIG’s FIA circuit also supports business-to-business traffic, email and cloud-based services. “Literally,” Roberts adds, if we don’t have Internet, we cannot function. We need incredibly reliable service, and TWCBC* has done a great job.”

With sensitive information, including *Star Citizen* source codes, flowing to the cloud, CIG also values the security of the *dedicated* Internet connectivity Spectrum Enterprise provides. John Erskine, CIG Vice President of Publishing, adds that “it is core to our ability to run the business and achieve the goals Chris has set up for us.”

CIG’s path to the future

There is still work to be done on *Star Citizen*, Roberts points out, adding that “it’s a blast” to get live feedback from players.

Once *Star Citizen* is completed, it will publish directly from CIG’s Austin studio to game servers on the Internet. At that point, Jones says additional bandwidth may be required. He is confident, however, that Spectrum Enterprise can provide the right upgrade path “at the scale, fidelity and to the degree and pace that we’re trying to do it.”

In looking at the breakthrough CIG is making with its high-speed Internet connectivity, Erskine says the company “couldn’t do what we’re doing... at the [needed] scale and pace...without this amount of capacity.”



Reliable, high-speed Fiber Internet Access (FIA) from Spectrum Enterprise means that CIG can support both distributed development and real-time collaboration.

“We have to [send] very large data chunks to the cloud and onto our content delivery networks. We wouldn’t be able to do that without the fast throughput we get with TWCBC*... fiber.”

—Chris Roberts

About Spectrum Enterprise

Spectrum Enterprise, a division of Charter Communications, is a national provider of scalable, fiber-based technology solutions serving many of America’s largest businesses and communications service providers. The broad Spectrum Enterprise portfolio includes Internet access, Ethernet access and networks, Voice and TV solutions extending to Managed IT solutions, including Application, Cloud Infrastructure and Managed Hosting Services offered by its affiliate, Navisite®. Our industry-leading team of experts works closely with clients to achieve greater business success by providing these right fit solutions designed to meet their evolving needs. For more information, visit enterprise.spectrum.com.