

# DEI's COVID-19 Offer Helps Ollin VFX Meet Project Deadlines



“ I mean, it's simple, it does what it should, it's there, it's reliable. That's exactly what we need.”

– Alejandro Diego,  
Co-founder  
and President  
Ollin VFX

When the pandemic lockdown forced everyone home, the remote team in Latin America was able to share large media files seamlessly with each other and vendors globally to complete visual effects for a new movie and TV series.

## Overview

Ollin (o-LEEN) means “movement” in the ancient Aztec language Nahuatl (NA-watil), the perfect name for visual effects and post-production company Ollin VFX that specializes in creating computer-generated imagery for television and film. Based in Mexico City, the company was established in 1998 and has grown to be the largest company of its kind in Latin America, working with global clients and creative vendors to provide concept design, pre- and post-visualization, 2D compositing, 3D/CG effects, and animation – whatever it takes to bring all the cool visual aspects of storytelling to the big and small screen.

Ollin VFX Co-founder and President Alejandro Diego became a customer of Data Expedition, Inc.® (DEI®) in late 2019 through a 5-day free trial that turned into a 4-capacity ExpeDat™ software license for accelerated data transport. The software is used between Ollin’s headquarters and artists and vendors in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, India and Hollywood.

## Challenges

The visual effects created by Ollin VFX can be seen in many well-known productions like *Jumanji*, *Godzilla*, *Deadpool*, and *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*. When COVID-19 necessitated a lockdown that required their artists work from home, they were faced with how to meet fast-approaching deadlines for two major projects: an Amazon-original zombie TV series called *Operation 8888* and *Mank*, a movie about screenwriter Herman J. Mankiewicz’s development of the 1941 classic *Citizen Kane*. *Operation 8888* is the first TV series of its kind to be produced in Mexico and *Mank* was shot in black & white in 6K resolution – much higher quality than the usual 2K or 4K – which made it exciting to work on, but the visual effects were creatively challenging due to the variations in shades of gray.

“Immediately, all of our artists started working from home and connecting via VPN to their workstation at the office,” Alejandro explained. When the lockdown happened in March, they needed to figure out a reliable way –



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fast – for everyone to easily access and work on files ranging in size from a few megabytes (MB) to several gigabytes (GB) from multiple remote locations.

Fortunately, shortly after the work-from-home mandate, DEI asked customers what they could do to help make this transition easier. In media & entertainment, as the Ollin team experienced right away, it is especially challenging for home networks to handle extremely large media files.

Alejandro responded to the offer, asking for a temporary increase in capacity to their existing ExpeDat license from 4 to 8-capacity to help accommodate their increased demand for ingest and other file transfer activities. DEI came through quickly and at no additional cost.

### Solution

ExpeDat, accelerated file transport software based on DEI's Multipurpose Transaction Protocol® (MTP™/IP), was a relatively new solution for the Ollin team that had just started using it a few months before COVID-19. They had used Signiant and Aspera for the same purpose in the past but were discouraged by the ongoing monthly fees imposed even when those solutions were not in use. With ExpeDat, on the other hand, each server license has a fixed, one-time price and there is no cost for idle clients.

In addition to liking the pricing model, Ollin appreciated having control over the server. "I can have my own server hosted in my own infrastructure, which is great, because we avoid that extra step of having to download or upload things to an outside server and then do the same on the other side," Alejandro said. "ExpeDat is controlled by us, it's secure, and it's super fast."



*Image courtesy of Netflix and Ollin VFX*

## ➔ KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ExpeDat enables remote media workflows.
- Fast and easy to deploy.
- Attractive pricing model.

With one license of ExpeDat installed over a rented high-speed network connection, the team began moving up to one TB of media files every day. With some help from DEI support, the engineering team tuned the network parameters to move the massive raw media files even more efficiently and faster.

This is significant because it can take many hours to download the huge computer-generated media files Ollin creates. Just the time saved from being able to directly transfer files adds to the value of the software.

"We used to have our own FTP server," he explained, "but that didn't have any technology that would allow it to go really fast, and at times it was very slow." With ExpeDat, Ollin's workflow is, "the same as having our own FTP server, but with the same speed as Aspera."

Using the software at the destination with clients is also extremely easy. "It literally takes five minutes to set it up, almost like copying something to a hard drive," Alejandro said.

COVID-19 hit the entertainment industry hard, and even now it remains uncertain when productions will resume shooting at the same pace as before the pandemic. "At a time like this, we cannot spend more money on infrastructure, especially knowing there's going to be a dip in incoming work," Alejandro explained. "So, the fact that DEI was the first to come to us and say, 'please let us know how we can help, and we'll be glad to' was very much appreciated."

Now that ExpeDat is a part of the Ollin VFX workflow, the benefits are clear.

"ExpeDat is very simple to use. It's just as fast as other data transport services out there, and I can own the license and not have to pay a monthly fee," Alejandro summarized. "I can have the server hosted in my own infrastructure, which is great, because we avoid that extra step of having to download or upload things to a server and do the same on the other side."

### About Data Expedition, Inc.

Data Expedition, Inc.® (DEI®) is the creator of the world's only data transport software that instantly adapts to fully utilize any network path, maximizing the throughput of existing network infrastructure. Since 2000, DEI has provided data transport solutions to the world's largest companies across nearly every continent and industry. The company's patented MTP™/IP technology uses unique flow-control and error recovery algorithms to achieve high-network efficiency across all IP networks. Companies using DEI's solutions can automatically transport data as fast as the underlying infrastructure will allow without human intervention at a fraction of the cost of other solutions. For more information or to download a FREE trial of ExpeDat for the cloud, please visit [www.DataExpedition.com](http://www.DataExpedition.com).

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