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Ewan Johnson
Quantum Storage UK

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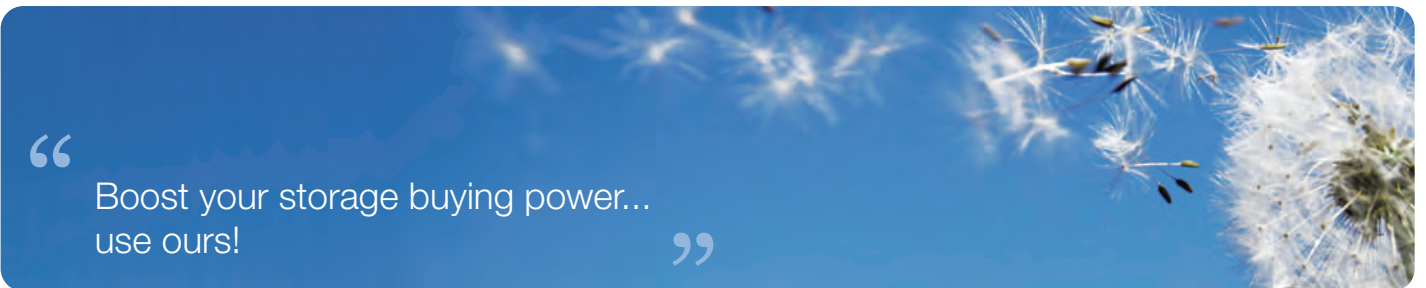
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StorNext & Scalar Series

Real time ingest and move to HD gives Lime a twist for their digital workflow and archive

From its inception, Lime Pictures—the independent producer of some of the best-known and popular dramas on British television—has pioneered real time tapeless workflow by filming its studio-based material directly onto the Storage Area Network (SAN).

There are very few solutions available that can provide a guaranteed stable platform to provide a real time tapeless workflow, and in the early days Lime was challenged to implement their vision. In addition to real time ingest, Lime was driving the quest for simultaneous workflow: making content available at the same time to all aspects of production from edit through to final content ready for play-out. Lime evaluated and soon after deployed StorNext® File System that provided them with a centralized storage pool accessible immediately and simultaneously to the company's editing suites as filming proceeded.

With many of the company's productions operating to tight deadlines and high frequency of output, this rapid, reliable digital workflow is paying dividends.

Reliability and usability have been transformed since we deployed the digital workflow solution. We haven't experienced any downtime and our productivity has increased significantly. Our confidence in the system has certainly risen by 100 percent.

Mike Horan
SAN Support Engineer

THE MOVE TO HIGH DEFINITION

HD brings its own challenges with a four-fold increase in content and bandwidth requirements. The HD challenges on how to keep control over storage costs while maintaining the high performance workflow needed were met with the integration of StorNext Storage Manager.

Storage Manager works seamlessly with the File System to provide digital archive, including intelligent storage of contents across a cost effective tiered storage environment. Better still, content is automatically archived to a robust, cost-effective environment, where it is available as a searchable repository of content for future broadcast operations. Live ingest, editing and payout never looked so good.

LIVE INGEST AND HIGH PERFORMANCE WORKFLOW

Hollyoaks, one of Lime Pictures best-known dramas, is broadcast five nights each week, with the original SD requirement to ingest at 50MB/sec, with each episode consuming approximately 150 gigabytes of storage. It was apparent to John Robertson, Production Server Control (PSC) Manager at Lime Pictures and his team that a digital workflow solution would enable the company to effectively store content in a consolidated environment and share it among the edit suites and other teams.

"Lime Pictures was already a satisfied Quantum customer having previously deployed a Quantum Scalar® library to backup and recover data in existing systems. When we saw the StorNext solution, it appeared to answer all our questions. The software was proven in the market, its open architecture gave us the flexibility to choose whichever technologies we wanted, and it offered rich acquisition, ingest, and production editing functionality. Best of all, it provided the resilience and reliability we needed. DataDirect Networks (DDN), the disk storage partner also endorsed the solution."



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Mike Horan
SAN Support Engineer

SOLUTION OVERVIEW

- Quantum StorNext File System
- Quantum StorNext Storage Manager
- DDN Fibre Channel Production Disk
- Quantum Scalar i2000 intelligent enterprise library

KEY BENEFITS

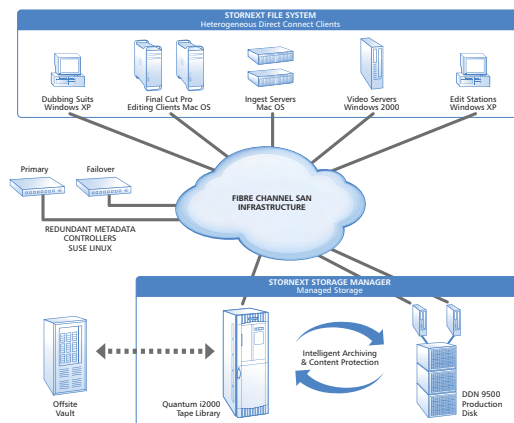
- Enabled the company to get content to air faster and share content more efficiently and cost effectively.
- Allowed teams to effectively store content in a consolidated environment, share it among the edit suites, and deploy the solution into existing workflow.
- Editing teams can quickly browse for relevant clips or perform proxy editing to build a ready-to-play segment.
- Time needed to create productions has been reduced and equipment costs like tape stock and VTR replacement heads have fallen.
- Transformed tape-less workflow reliability and usability.
- Automatically archived content that is not actively in use—the virtualized data location ensuring any file can easily be accessed for re-use.
- Expanded storage pools into multi-tier archives, automatically moving data between the disk and Scalar i2000 tape resources to reduce costs and protect content.

Being heterogeneous, the StorNext file system can seamlessly handle Windows, Apple, Unix and Linux operating systems concurrently, leaving Lime to select best-of-breed applications on platforms of their choice. Existing Apple Xsan workstation clients can be redeployed as StorNext clients without additional expense. Since data never has to be written out to tape during the editing process, the time needed to create Lime Pictures broadcasts has been reduced and equipment costs like tape stock and VTR replacement heads have also fallen.

“Quantum StorNext File System sits in the background and does everything we ask of it,” says Mike Horan, SAN Support Engineer, Lime Pictures. “Reliability and usability have been transformed since we deployed the digital workflow solution. We haven’t experienced any downtime and our productivity has increased significantly. Our confidence in the system has certainly risen by 100 percent.”

Robertson concurs. “If the SAN decides to sneeze, we know we won’t experience any delays to production with StorNext. Our users like it too. An editor recently said to me, ‘The ingest and editing phases are seamless. We can import immediately and there’s no judder on the shot’. When these guys pass a compliment like that, you know you’re onto a winner!”

HIGH DEFINITION AND THE DIGITAL ARCHIVE
Moving to High Definition has its own challenges, with a four fold increase in content, leading to higher bandwidth requirements and enhanced storage infrastructure requirements that can support both current and longer term reusable content. Lime Pictures took the decision to complement the StorNext File System with StorNext Storage Manager combined with a Quantum Scalar i2000 library and an increase in the DDN primary storage (to 102 terabytes).



StorNext Storage Manager complements the existing StorNext high performance file system by providing a tiered storage infrastructure that is scalable. Content that is not actively in use is automatically archived from production disk to the near-line Scalar i2000 tape library, so reducing storage costs. Further costs and data protection is accommodated by using the off-site vaulting option, negating the need for separate backup hardware. Archived content is available through the file system, at the same place that it was originally ingested or worked on using a virtualized content location.

“All of this data movement is transparent so that applications and operators do not have to worry about where data is located,” concludes Robertson. “Irrespective of whether the content is on the primary disk or tape it all looks like it is in the same location. This enables Lime Pictures to create a large, searchable repository of content for future broadcast operations”.

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John Robertson
Production Server Control (PSC) Manager

ABOUT LIME PICTURES

Lime Pictures is one of the UK’s largest independent producers and is responsible for some of the best-known and popular drama on British television. Channel 4’s Hollyoaks is produced by the company—which is one of Liverpool’s biggest employers, with a staff of more than 350. In addition to this flagship output, Lime Pictures also has production teams working on a wide range of drama projects and development. The company was formed in 1982 and originally known as Mersey Television, before All3Media’s acquisition in 2005 and the name change to Lime Pictures in 2006. Lime is derived from the first two letters of Liverpool and Mersey.



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