



StorNext

Leading Media Company Refreshes Xsan Environment with StorNext

When Fairfax Media, a leading Australia-based media company, realized that an Apple Xserve/Xsan-only environment could no longer meet its mission-critical server and storage needs, it selected Quantum's high-performance StorNext storage and collaboration platform. The transition was seamless, and the redesigned workflow has enabled a 40 percent increase in productivity.

Fairfax Media is one of the leading media companies in Australia, and—like other organizations originally founded on traditional print—has been rapidly expanding its publishing to include web and online delivery systems. So when the team in charge of creating and posting video for the company's many online services realized that its legacy partner, Apple, was changing its approach to media workflow solutions, the team knew a change was needed to support Fairfax's continued rapid growth.

SYSTEM BUILT AROUND APPLE XSAN AND XSERVE

"In the old days, the team started out with a few individual Mac edit suites," explains David McMillan, Head of Production at Fairfax Media. "But we quickly upgraded to shared storage built around Apple's Xsan to give better workflow, faster performance, and a more collaborative approach. We had to do that to keep up with the growth in demand for video content and to meet the short production cycles that always characterize a news-driven organization."

The system that Fairfax built was Apple to the core—Xserve RAID storage, Xsan on Xserves for high-speed collaboration, and Mac edit stations running Final Cut Pro as the primary production tool.

"The expanded system served us well and got us to a production system that could sustain production of 300 video clips a week," says McMillan. "But we knew we were going to need more. So when Apple announced the end-of-life plans for Xserve RAID and changes to the roadmap for Final Cut Pro, we realized we needed to rethink our approach and look for additional partners with a firm, long-term commitment to supporting video production.

LOOKING FOR A WORKFLOW STORAGE EXPERT

Several factors were critical as Fairfax looked for alternatives. It needed high-performance shared storage for collaborative media workflows, with multiple editors sharing high-resolution content—the company already had some workstations re-sharing over Ethernet and knew that faster performance was a requirement. Fairfax also wanted a partner that was not only experienced in storage and media and entertainment workflows but also had a roadmap that provided a vision for improving workflow efficiency and productivity as well as a commitment to the market. In addition, scalability was important to support a rapidly growing demand for the department's production, and so was the option of expanding storage choices in the future to take advantage of lower-cost, higher-capacity archive technology.

IMPORTANCE OF AN OPEN SYSTEMS APPROACH

"We really wanted to put ourselves in a position to take advantage of more hardware and software options today as our business evolves," says McMillan. "And even though we liked Apple products, we no longer wanted to have roadmap decisions of a single supplier put our own plans in jeopardy. In addition, we absolutely had to have a smooth transition—we are in the news business and needed to be able to get to a working system fast, in a way that did not disrupt the tools and processes that our editors were already using."

With those requirements in mind, the Fairfax team looked at all the alternatives, both doing its own research and using an experienced integrator, Computers Now. The company rejected some because of technical limits, including requirements to use a



"We chose Quantum partly for technical reasons—the products were just what we needed—but also because the Quantum team understands the video production environment like no one else we talked to."

David McMillan
Head of Production
at Fairfax Media

SOLUTION OVERVIEW

- StorNext® Q-Series Disk (100TB usable)
- StorNext M330 Metadata Appliance
- Apple Final Cut Pro, Adobe Creative Suite

KEY BENEFITS

- Enables collaborative workflow compatible with legacy Xsan-based environment
- Provides open-system shared storage solution that allows use of Mac- and Windows-based clients and applications
- Delivers seamless transition from legacy system to new solution—no retraining or downtime
- Leverages partner with expertise in media and entertainment and long-term commitment to the market
- Provides highly scalable solution, allowing system to grow with future needs
- Offers option for future expansion to policy-based archive solutions

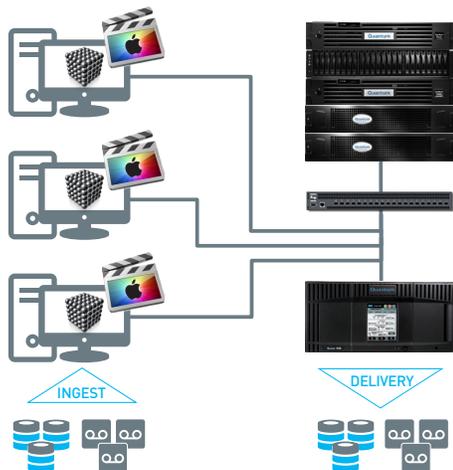
CASE STUDY

specific file format or proprietary media management tools. Those would have demanded too steep a learning curve for the production team and would have again involved too much reliance on a single supplier. In other cases, the team rejected suppliers that did not demonstrate a long-term commitment to the video production market.

SEAMLESS TRANSITION WITH QUANTUM STORNEXT

After looking at all the options, Fairfax chose an appliance-based Quantum StorNext solution, including StorNext Q-Series high-performance disk storage and a StorNext metadata appliance for file sharing and serving as the underlying file system.

"We chose Quantum partly for technical reasons—the products were just what we needed—but also because the Quantum team understands the video production environment like no one else we talked to," explains McMillan. "We also checked with a lot of Quantum customers in our field and heard only positive comments. That experience in helping others gave us very high confidence that we'd be able to pull off the transition quickly and easily."



The installation went smoothly—the entire implementation stage was completed on a four-week timeline, and the final roll-out took place over one weekend. In the last week, staff copied content from Xsan to removable media. After users went home on Friday, the Quantum and Computers Now team worked with Fairfax over the weekend to import all the data into the new system.

"The Quantum team was terrific to work with," explains Laura Dowd, Account Manager at Computers Now. "They really knew what they were doing and finished the job quickly."

"When the editors came in on Monday morning, all the data was there on StorNext, all the tools worked just like before, and everything was ready to go," says McMillan. "No interruptions, no delays, no retraining—it was great."

PRODUCTIVITY UP 40%, PLANS FOR EXPANSION UNDER WAY

According to McMillan, the new system is already paying dividends in productivity.

"We've increased the number of clips we can publish per week by about 40% with a very small staff increase," says McMillan.

Fairfax has already begun to plan the next phase of its system, taking advantage of StorNext's flexible, open approach to platform support (the team installed its first Adobe editing suites, with plans to expand in the future).

"We really like the idea of adding the StorNext archiving capability, including Quantum's LTO-based StorNext AEL Archives," continues McMillan. "That will let us make copies of our content on tape automatically, both to protect it and archive it, but still let us access it quickly for re-use, something that we need to do all the time. It will speed up our process and give us a much more economical platform than one built only on disk storage."

"We really like the idea of adding the StorNext archiving capability, including Quantum's LTO-based StorNext AEL Archives. That will let us make copies of our content on tape automatically, both to protect it and archive it, but still let us access it quickly for re-use... It will speed up our process and give us a much more economical platform than one built only on disk storage."

David McMillan
Head of Production at Fairfax Media

ABOUT FAIRFAX MEDIA LTD

Fairfax Media Limited (ASX:FXJ) is a leading multi-platform media company in Australasia. The group comprises metropolitan, rural, regional and community mastheads and serves its audiences through high-quality, independent journalism and offers dynamic venues for commerce and information. Fairfax Media has a portfolio of leading websites, tablet and smartphone apps, including the online news sites smh.com.au and theage.com.au in Australia and stuff.co.nz in New Zealand. The group also has leading classified and transaction websites in Australia.

To contact your local sales office, please visit www.quantum.com

Quantum
BE CERTAIN