TRANSMISSION & TRANSMITERS: ARCHIVE & STORAGE **USER REPORTS**

New SAN Aids Workflow

By DAVE BLACKHAM

Granada Bristol, a division of ITV — Britain's most popular commercial television channel — is a large modern facility, consisting of 14 editing suites producing programmes transmitted to many countries. Programmes vary in content and include natural history, science, history, drama, and popular factual productions.

With nearly 45TB of local media storage, we needed a more efficient way to share media files and archived data. In order to improve our efficiency, we recently installed SANmp software from Studio Network Solutions. SANmp is multi-platform volume management software that enables multiple audio, video and/or graphic workstations to concurrently access information from a SAN.

The introduction of this software has meant increased accessibility, stability and efficiency. Being somewhat of a cynic regarding software these days, I was really surprised at the simplicity of the install and set up of the software.

One of the main benefits we have experienced with the software is its flexibility with many different media applications, such as Final Cut Pro, Motion, Avid, Shake, Pro Tools, Reason, Combustion and After Effects. This flexibility was extremely important to our creative team, who demand access to the best creative applications available on the market today.
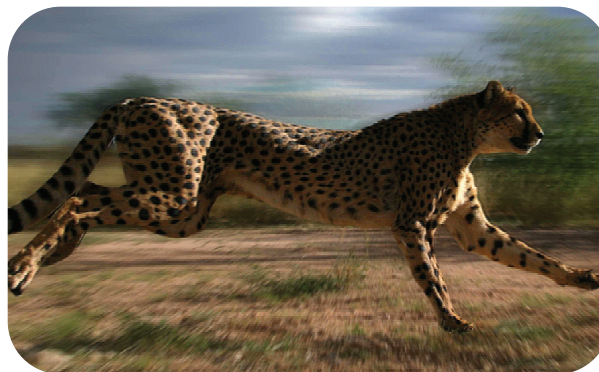
Clearly, an infrastructure such as Granada Bristol has tremendous storage requirements. We currently use Apple's Xserve RAID units to support our G5 host machines. The resolution of the media can be anything from DV, SD or HD running at virtually any commonly used frame rate. While using local hosted storage for up to 2TB per suite is fine if the intent is to never move the media between editing suites, data management can become troublesome and lead to increased costs or potentially lost data when multiple suites are working on the same project simultaneously.

We have been able to use our existing Xraid storage and scale the system to suit the size of the business very easily. One very big concern was performance, as other media SAN systems can have restrictions on the number of streams of data that can service a particular room, leading to overall performance issues of the SAN. The approach in using SNS' volume based SAN software ensures we can guarantee 200MB to each and every room and still have the flexibility to add further disk partitions should the room require additional storage or production requires that we change rooms and still have access to the same media.

As a result of our improved workflow, we have received a number of inquiries from our area competitors and ITV partners regarding the Studio Network Solutions software we are using. We have welcomed the opportunity to share with our colleagues the many benefits of the software technology.

One of our biggest concerns was that our SAN system must support a range of operating systems to ensure that the creative staff has access to files through their chosen application and SANmp satisfies all these needs. In fact, with access to such a flexible SAN support system, costs have been reduced while the standard of support and overall reliability has improved.

A still from *Return of the Cheetah,* a programme Granada Bristol TV edited with the Studio Network Solutions SANmp software.

In an effort to continue to use converging IT technology in the media environment, we look forward to expanding our SAN system with SNS global SAN components to leverage more value from the existing infrastructure. This will allow clients connected via IP to access the existing FC disks. In user benefit terms, any production team who wishes to edit DV material on a laptop, for example, and has access to our LAN, could easily access their content that is hosted on the FC network. Again this will allow more creative freedom, flexible working practice and better overall cost benefits.

CONTACTS

+1 877 537 2094
sales@studionetworksolutions.com

Dave Blackham is Operations Manager for Granada Bristol.