



Playboy TV Maximizes SAN Resources With QLogic Fibre Channel Switch

Challenge

Lack of shared storage limits HDTV production capacity.

Solution

22 Tbytes of online storage connected with Fibre Channel SAN.

Result

QLogic SANbox2™-64 switch effectively enables connections between edit bays and shared storage.

As Playboy TV began ramping up its production workload for the addition of numerous new shows, it became increasingly apparent that large volumes of shared storage were necessary. In this scenario, simultaneous access by editors, producers and advertising quickly became mission-critical.

Playboy TV, a part of the Playboy Entertainment Group, has a 108,000-square-foot facility near Los Angeles. The building includes three production areas—production, post-production and distribution. The digital infrastructure can accommodate 24 channels; Playboy TV currently feeds 16 on-air networks via satellite and cable worldwide that carry adult content and sports. The facility has seen workflow transition from labor-intensive, linear editing systems to a file-server-based SAN infrastructure broadcasting in high-definition television (HDTV).

Shows produced onsite are created in HDTV, while material that arrives on tape is immediately digitized into the system; other programs are received digitally by satellite. All of the production areas are networked, which makes the facility tapeless.

Darren Turbow, Director of Operations for Playboy TV, installed a total of 34 Apple G5 computers on a Fibre Channel network running Final Cut Pro and Adobe After Effects editing and compositing software. Sixteen of the G5s are set up as dedicated editing workstations—22 Tbytes of storage are connected online to an Apple Xserve RAID system.

"By consolidating our storage on one manageable SAN, we are now able to share 22 Tbytes of video data across three separate workgroups," said Turbow. "This includes compressed high definition and uncompressed high definition on the same network. This has allowed us to make great gains in productivity."

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SANbox2-64 Highlights

The SANbox2-64 modular fabric switch was designed to fill the gap between Edge and Director switches. The highly scalable, modular bladed architecture optimizes performance while keeping costs down.

Features include:

- Scalability from 16 to 64 ports.
- 99.999% fabric availability.
- Low cost-per-port.
- QLogic SANsurfer GUI-based software allows for point-and-click management.
- 2Gbyte frame latency.

A Vital Role for the SANbox2-64

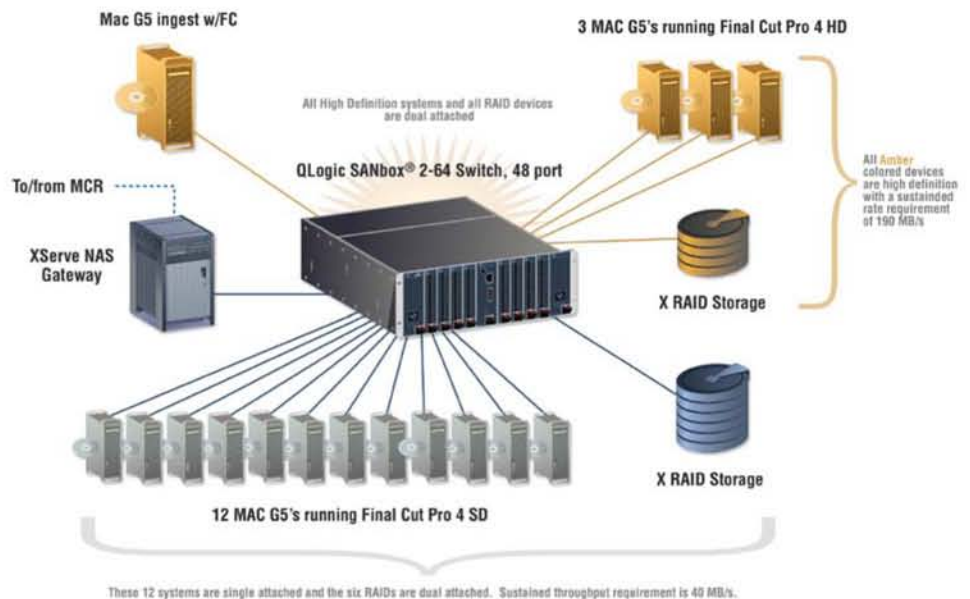
Because the workstations are combined into three distinct workgroups on dedicated networks, it's imperative that the communication be flawless, as well as cost-effective and performance-driven. Enter the SANbox2-64 modular fabric switch.

Storage insiders call the QLogic switch the heart and soul of the custom Fibre Channel SAN network—the SANbox2-64 effectively enables connections between all of the sources to and from the individual edit systems and Apple Xserve servers.

"Some people thought we were never going to be able to move this much data around, but we did and are doing it every day," said Chris Coleman, Senior Systems Engineer for QLogic. "This includes compressed high definition and uncompressed high definition on the same network. This had never been attempted before."

The SANbox2-64 modular fabric switch is a new class of switch that makes SAN deployment easier and more cost-effective. Easy to scale from 16 to 64 ports, the SANbox2-64 offers redundancy and hot-swap capabilities typically found only in expensive Director-class switches.

The SANbox2-64 was designed for the non-stop frenetic pace of relentless TV production. In other words, the show must go on—all day, every day. Indeed, Turbow said he has not had any problems during the past 10 months. "It's proven to be incredibly reliable," he said.



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ESS ENTERPRISE
 Storage Solutions
 3835R East Thousand Oaks BLVD. #315
 Westlake Village, CA 91365
 Tel 877.230.2837 / Fax 805.435.2500 / www.ess-direct.com