Egg Future-Proofs Post Workflow with EditShare XStream EFS

Leading Irish post production and VFX studio Egg selected the high-performance EditShare XStream EFS 450 scale-out storage platform with Flow media asset management and Ark archiving capability as the core infrastructure for its projects dealing in high volume, high resolution content.

"We wanted to bring more streamlined efficiency to the whole operation and also to accommodate rising storage demands for greater data at higher resolutions."
- Gareth Young, Joint-CEO, Egg

About Egg

Egg is an international post and VFX facility whose aim is to facilitate great storytelling. Founded in 2003, the Dublin-based house has evolved quickly to become one of Ireland's leading post and VFX houses and a founding member of the Visual Effects Association of Ireland (VFXAI). Its portfolio includes productions for both domestic and international markets in television and feature film. The backbone of its success are a team of young and talented artists and technicians driven by a passion for creativity with technology, at every stage of the production. Egg has developed a robust and versatile pipeline fit for a wide range of projects from low budget projects to major releases.

High demand meets rising data

The powerhouse facility, co-founded by Gareth Young and Gary Shortall, is known for creating some of Ireland's most beloved episodic programs and groundbreaking films and documentaries. With a global reputation for excellence in post services, the busy Egg facility finishes upwards of 16 films and a slew of TV projects per year.

"When we started Egg we wanted to offer a service that was in line with this philosophy and nurture the strong relationships we had built up through our careers," explains Young. *"Having worked as editors ourselves we know that every great project needs strong ideas. We can advise and inspire clients to develop these ideas and find the heart of the story."*

The extensive list of high-demand services offered at Egg includes editing, color grading, audio and VFX. It houses 11 Avid cutting rooms, two fully equipped DaVinci Resolve colour grade suites, a sizeable visual effects department that can accommodate more than 40 creative staff, plus three Avid Pro Tools-based sound studios and three sound stages.

"We run our post house in 4K as a matter of standard if the rushes are acquired in 4K," says Young. "We can

deliver 4K Digital Cinema Prints even though most features still require a 2K deliverable. On the TV side we are seeing increased demand for 4K masters. Regardless of final destination, the resolution of the work that we routinely ingest into our pipeline is somewhere between 4K and 5K and therefore there are increasing data volumes to manage and store."

Workflow bottleneck

With most projects developed in file formats of 4K and above, the large post facility required a robust infrastructure that could manage the intense demands on bandwidth and fast-paced collaboration required by all departments. "*In our building we had a variety of storage systems, a mish-mash really, which we'd built up over the years*," explains Young. "*We have areas with Avid ISIS for offline and online editorial and areas with Isilon storage also for online, grading and VFX. Our infrastructure requirements are quite steep in terms of performance and reliability. So, we decided to condense it down into one format, to bring more streamlined efficiency to the whole operation and also to accommodate rising storage demands for greater data at higher resolutions.*"

To accommodate these requirements Egg's creatives and technical team decided to upgraded the facility infrastructure. Following evaluation of several options, including Avid, they selected EditShare XStream EFS 450 scale-out, shared storage and the Ark archiving solutions with integrated Flow MAM featuring the Flow Story editor.

This infrastructure provides tools for managing ingest, tracking assets and metadata, project sharing and tiered storage with automation between production storage and archives, as well as collaborative tools for managing editorial and reviews.

Power and simplicity

"*We selected EditShare EFS 450 for a number of reasons,*" explains Young. "*We wanted the power to allocate bandwidth on demand to give us the real-time speed to handle 4K, or 5K or 6K which is very, very useful when it comes to original camera formats. EditShare's storage performance capabilities gives us all the power that we need.*"

"*In terms of workflow, we needed a solution that would work seamlessly with our Avids in moving files to and from the offline and into the grade. The idea was to centralize content for project sharing for both online and offline groups so that our editors can share the same media, share the same projects and the same bins. They fire sequences back and forth to each other.*"

"*For the offline world, that's a big plus to be able to do that, and while you could do this in other systems, EditShare does it very well,*" says Young. "*And of course, integrating the picture department with online was a big change for us because we were never able to share media between online and grade in a time-effective way before. Now we can, and that is a big efficiency gain.*"

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"The fact that EditShare also facilitates Adobe is a useful tool to have since it future-proofs us should we at some point adopt Adobe Premiere as part of our workflow."

Egg further benefits from the additional modules EditShare offers through Flow.

"The Flow Story and the Flow Browse were the key factors that made us think EditShare was is a good idea," says Young. *"For me, as an editor, these will be very useful tools for us."*

Egg also appreciated having a one-vendor-solution that provides the level of service and support it requires.

"It was a key point for us in our decision to go with EditShare," Young elaborates. *"We don't have to deal with third-party vendors blaming each other if something goes wrong. We know that EditShare is just a phone call away, and they are going to help us solve any problems that arise, no matter what happens."*

Fully integrated

All of Egg's offline, online, audio and grading areas are connected to EditShare while the facility's visual effects area has its own storage system based on Isilon and bridged into the XStream EFS' tiered storage environment.

"We had Isilon more broadly across our VFX and finishing areas. But we felt it was going to be too old to totally depend on for mission critical work. We didn't want to get stuck with a facility working on old equipment so we've moved all our mission critical workflows to EditShare but felt it better to retain Isilon for rendering VFX and then to move the files over to EditShare when it's finished rendering."

EditShare Ark completes the Xstream EFS system at Egg, offering a tiered storage workflow with automated backup and restore functionality from LTO-7.

"With EditShare we have a future-proofed solution to meeting the demands of high volume, high capacity feature film, TV drama and creative documentary productions," says Young. "The full solution provides us with the media management tools for controlling assets from ingest to archive, plus we easily expand by adding nodes to increase capacity and bandwidth as we grow."

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