EditShare Makes the Grade at Sunderland

XStream storage solution provides an ideal, cross-platform, real-world training environment

The University of Sunderland School of Arts, Design and Media in Northeast England operates one of the most vibrant and well-equipped media departments in the country. With a rating of excellence from the Quality Assurance Agency, the media and cultural studies department attracts a diverse group of students to its undergraduate and graduate programs in film, production, journalism, television, radio and public relations.

THE CHALLENGE

The School's coursework combines theoretical studies and practical experience with students learning on the same types of equipment and systems used in by industry experts. To keep pace with the latest technology innovations, the David Puttnam Media Centre at Sunderland recently completed a £1.5 million upgrade of its media production department. The project included a shift to a totally tapeless environment with centralised and expandable storage; the workflow would mirror the most up-to-date professional facilities. The School was also installing 70 Avid Media Composer and Apple Final Cut

Pro editing systems. They needed a storage system that could interchangeably handle FCP and Avid files as well as materials from other effects and compositing programs. "From an infrastructure point of view, it absolutely can be the worst environment you can think of because of the mix of systems," says Gary Stubbs, Media Project Manager at Sunderland."We needed to cover so much in terms of software. We had a lot of users and we needed to be conscious that they were students, not computer experts, and a shared storage system that was easy to use but efficient was paramount".

THE SOLUTION

Working with regional broadcast equipment and authorised EditShare reseller Digital Garage (www.digitalgarage. tv), Sunderland installed a 96TB EditShare XStream System as its centralised storage solution. Designed for the most extreme and demanding media sharing workflows, EditShare XStream combines the award-winning collaborative features of the EditShare Storage Series with the highest performance hardware available. XStream offers large creative workgroups - from digital intermediate, news, sports, reality TV and education – the ability to simultaneously

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share high-resolution media for real-time edit-in-place and true workflow collaboration. EditShare XStream takes advantage of PCI-E infrastructure to combine a very high number of simultaneous video streams with almost limitless storage scalability.

The EditShare XStream provides a truly open environment for freely sharing media, regardless of application or platform, file size or format. With EditShare, users of Apple, Adobe, Assimilate, Autodesk, Avid, Digidesign, Sony, Thomson and other systems can connect via standard Gigabit or 10-Gigabit to the EditShare Extreme. At Sunderland, the 70 dual-boot computers run both Avid and Final Cut editing software as well as AfterEffects from Adobe Production Suite. They are connected via standard CAT 6 Gigabit Ethernet cabling to one of three HP ProCurve switches which connect to the EditShare Xstream via 10-Gigabit Ethernet to ensure maximum through-put for sharing large volumes of work, including high definition formats with speed and efficiency.

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THE WORKFLOW

Depending on specific coursework and the level of sophistication, students can be working on anything from basic broadcast production and editing in a classroom setting to full-blown studio productions, documentaries or independent films in private edit suites. Regardless of where the students are working, they can access content stored in the EditShare XStream.

The rights and permissions structure in EditShare allow access by only the authorised users to specific content. EditShare's rules-driven workflow ensures that no data is ever overwritten or destroyed, an especially important feature in a teaching environment. "Everyone has adapted very well," says Stubbs. "It's quite easy to locate your work from whatever position you're working at and just get right on with it. In terms of administration, it's very straight forward and it's easy to set up and organise the passwords and access rights."

In classroom situations, instructors use projectors to explain exercises and students log on at individual computers to simultaneously access the video from assigned folders in the XStream to work on their editing and compositing assignments. Instructors are able to view student work-in-progress and offer tips and critiques. Coursework emphasises practical and artistic skill sets as well as theoretical. As students advance, they shoot their own high-definition video using SONY EX cameras and often work in teams or independently.

EditShare's unique project sharing for both Avid and Final Cut Pro workgroups simplifies group collaboration on projects. Editors can instantly see, copy or revise the work of colleagues with the assurance that a bin, sequence or project is never overwritten. The David Puttnam Media Centre has several edit suites strategically located throughout the facility, giving students the opportunities to work in shared breakout suites or one 15 individual suites which include specialised hardware for finishing work.

THE BENEFITS

With as many as 400 students matriculating through Sunderland's media programs at any given time, the Puttnam Media Centre is continuously busy. Thanks to the Centre's high

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> **After pricing out and comparing several SAN & NAS solutions partnered with combinations of asset management systems, we decided on Editshare with Flow asset management leveraging Gigabit Ethernet.**

performance EditShare XStream, the heavy volume of editing work and instruction can be handled without system slowdowns. In addition to the strong rights and permissions structure, the system's RAID 5 hardware configuration offers additional protection against loss of data. And because the EditShare XStream can be easily expanded, there's no worry about adding storage capacity anytime in the future. The combination of state-of-the-art tools and EditShare's collaborative

workflow further strengthens the University's strong ties with many professional broadcast and postproduction organisations who provide and full time job opportunities to the students. "Because we provide excellent instruction that incorporates hands-on knowledge on the most advanced systems, our graduates are well-rounded and prepared to assume responsible roles in the industry as they begin their careers," says Stubbs. "That's our mission."

SPECIFICATIONS

96 TB EditShare XStream Series
Connect via 10GB Ethernet
to HP ProCurve switches
(2 x 48 port; 1 x 24 port)

67 x Mac Pro dual-boot machines
Connect via 1 GB Ethernet
to HP ProCurve switches

All Mac Pros include:
- Final Cut Pro
- Avid Media Composer
- Adobe Production Suite
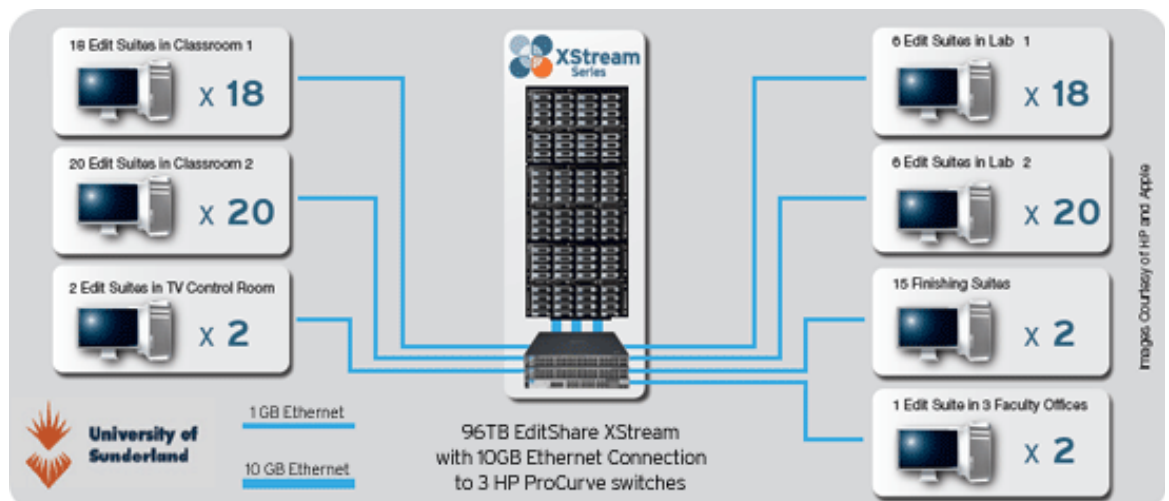
Mac Pros distributed in Puttnam Media Centre:
2 x Classroom settings (18 and 20 systems)
2 x Lab Settings (6 systems each)
15 x individual finishing suites
2 x systems in TV Gallery
6 x systems in staff offices (3 connected to EditShare).

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