



CASE STUDY

Kansas State University's College of Education Uses StorNext to Upgrade Media Operations

The media team at Kansas State University's College of Education realized it needed to replace its aging Xsan system with a new workflow solution if it was going to keep producing award-winning documentaries and instructional content. The answer—with the right combination of performance, economy, and Xsan compatibility—was a Quantum StorNext shared storage and data management solution.

KANSAS STATE
UNIVERSITY.

FEATURED PRODUCTS



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Matthew Heinrich

Network administrator, Catalyst media center, KSU



on our second or third generation of hi-res cameras, and even when the ultimate playout will be at lower resolution, we create virtually everything in 4K,” says Heinrich. “We recognize that we are creating content not just for use today, but for extended future use. When we send a team to Tanzania or Ecuador, as we did for recent documentary projects, we want that content to remain available for reuse for decades and beyond.”

TEAM NEEDS TO TRANSITION FROM XSAN TO NEW WORKFLOW SOLUTION

This commitment to high production levels has meant that the Catalyst team has had to regularly update its infrastructure to keep up with advances in the industry. “Workflow efficiency is very important to us because we normally have multiple editors working on the same project at once,” explains Heinrich. “Apple Xsan provided that shared environment initially, but when Apple changed its emphasis away from Xsan, we decided to move to a new future-proof workflow platform.”

In its search, the Catalyst team looked at all of the available storage alternatives. Heinrich explains the priorities: “We wanted a very high-performance shared workflow that could support the hi-res work we were doing. We needed to keep costs as low as possible. And we needed a solution from a supplier that was committed to supporting media production technology for the long haul.” The team also hoped that it could find a solution that would provide continuity with its existing tools and processes, so it could keep using the storage resources it already had. “With several vendors that we considered, we would have had to replace all of our existing storage, something that would have driven costs way up.”

STORNEXT MEETS FULL RANGE OF NEEDS

Ultimately, the team decided to upgrade its storage system to Quantum StorNext. StorNext enables a shared, high-performance workflow in a Fibre Channel SAN environment, allowing multiple users to access the same storage resources and

the same files at the same time. As Heinrich explains, “StorNext supports the highest performance Fibre Channel connectivity as well as LAN-based NAS storage. It allowed us to keep our existing storage that we already had installed, which gave it a substantial cost advantage, and it is completely compatible with Xsan.” The StorNext system’s status as a worldwide standard across media production companies, television networks, and motion picture studios gave the team confidence in Quantum’s long-term commitment to advancing and supporting the market. “StorNext was the only solution we saw that could meet all of our needs,” says Heinrich.

SMOOTH TRANSITION PRESERVES CONTENT, TOOLS, AND PROCESSES

Heinrich wanted to do the installation himself, so he read all the materials that Quantum provided and talked to the company’s service staff for guidance when he had questions. “The materials were thorough and the tech support was great,” recalls Heinrich. “That, coupled with my background in Xsan, gave me the confidence to take it on.” When D-Day came, Heinrich installed the StorNext system, including Quantum Xcellis workflow storage appliances, on a Thursday, and rolled out the new system the following weekend. “The transition from Xsan to StorNext was incredibly smooth,” says Heinrich. “We were up and running on Monday morning, all the content was there for the editors, and all the tools and processes looked just the same. The only changes were the volume names.”

StorNext continues to provide seamless support for the production teams and handles whatever jobs the Catalyst team throws at it. “With our new cameras, we are now streaming multiple 4K streams into StorNext and doing production work at the same time, and the system doesn’t ever slow down,” says Heinrich. In addition, the system reliability has been perfect. “We haven’t needed a single service call since we did the installation—it is great.”

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KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

SOLUTION OVERVIEW

- Quantum StorNext® software and Xcellis® workflow storage platform

KEY BENEFITS

- The StorNext high-performance shared workflow saves time and accelerates projects by allowing multiple workstations to collaborate on high-resolution projects.
- Compatibility with Xsan preserves customers’ investment in existing content, tools, and processes.
- Support for multiple storage platforms reduces costs by allowing the customer to use existing storage resources.
- Seamless transition from Xsan to StorNext maximizes productivity for editors and the production team.
- Heterogeneous server platform support enables better protection by providing support for commercial, automated backup, and recovery tools.
- Quantum’s long-term commitment to the media and entertainment market provides certainty for the future.

Kansas State University’s College of Education prepares more educators for the classroom than any other institution in the state, and provides national leadership in the development of innovative pedagogical programs at both undergraduate and graduate levels. In addition to focusing on traditional areas of the curriculum—learning theory, content expertise, instructional practices, and professional responsibility—the college has been a trailblazer in applying advanced media technology to its broad educational mission.

All of the school’s students are taught the most effective ways to use digital resources in the classroom and across the extended learning environment. The institution operates its own media center, the Catalyst, which provides technology support, gives students and members of the faculty access to a wide variety of tools, including video production, and creates its own original content. Catalyst staff can do everything from burning DVDs for classroom use to creating full-scale documentaries that air on regional PBS stations.

VIDEO IS KEY TO PROMOTING EDUCATION MISSION

“The College of Education has had a full-time videographer for years,” explains Matthew Heinrich, the Catalyst’s network administrator. “That person works with advanced media students to create a remarkably wide range of materials, and because they include both instructional support content and public-facing documentaries, we have made it a priority to stay current with production tools and techniques.” The team’s output is substantial, normally including three full-length television documentaries a year focusing on broad educational issues and stressing the contributions of KSU faculty, students, and alumni.

Early in the history of the Catalyst, Heinrich and the IT team standardized on the Mac platform and brought in a full range of professional-grade production and post-production tools. The team installed Apple’s Xsan high-performance, Fibre Channel production environment and began producing most of its content in 4K. “We are



ENABLING PROTECTION, PRESERVING FUTURE OPTIONS

In addition to gaining a high-performance workflow, the Catalyst team uses a Commvault backup and recovery solution with StorNext to enable an important new option for protecting irreplaceable assets. “Because StorNext supports Windows server environments as well as Apple—the new system lets us use Commvault to back up all of our completed digital content and work in progress to a second location,” explains Heinrich. “It has really automated the process and given us an additional level of protection.”

“We are also pleased at the flexibility of StorNext,” adds Heinrich. “We’re talking about adding a layer of SSD in the future, creating a separate disk archive, and potentially using the cloud—all of which StorNext supports.”

ABOUT KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

The College of Education at Kansas State University is the leading preparer of teachers in the state of Kansas, with a dedication to preparing educators to be knowledgeable, ethical, caring decision makers for a diverse and changing world. The college’s mission is to deliver exemplary graduate and undergraduate education; to produce, interpret, and disseminate useful research and scholarship; to provide leadership, collaboration, and service within the profession; and to promote and celebrate diversity.

ABOUT QUANTUM

Quantum is a leading expert in scale-out tiered storage, archive, and data protection. The company’s StorNext platform powers modern high-performance workflows, enabling seamless, real-time collaboration and keeping content readily accessible for future use and remonetization. More than 100,000 customers have trusted Quantum to address their most demanding content workflow needs, including top studios, major broadcasters, and cutting-edge content creators. With Quantum, customers have the end-to-end storage platform they need to manage assets from ingest through finishing and into delivery and long-term preservation. See how at www.quantum.com/customerstories-mediaent.

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