



BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION

SUCCESS STORY

News giant assigns Neo Series™ tape library to cover storage

BACKGROUND

The BBC's Customer Information & Archives department manages and maintains the Corporation's vast online library of digital photographic images. These archives are accessible to all employees via the BBC global intranet network and play an extremely important role in the preparation of daily news bulletins. Images in the system, for example, are regularly used by the television news teams and by the BBC Web site (www.bbc.co.uk) to illustrate the day's stories.

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- Dave Bevan
Support Specialist
BBC

CHALLENGE

Originally the system—affectionately known in BBC circles as ELVIS (ELectronic Visual Image Store)—was backed up using a five-slot Quantum DLT 4500 Jukebox with a capacity of around 100 gigabytes (GB). Today, the system has a database of around 300,000 images and this is growing by around 1,000 new photographs every week from sources such as Press Association, Associated Press and AllSport. The database also includes the BBC's own extensive stills archive containing material from the 1920s through to the present day.

The existing backup unit was approaching the end of its life cycle and this was hastened by a management decision in early 2001 to enable employees to use the system to access all BBC program information from their desktop. This meant the addition of a further one million computer-based records and a back catalog comprising 1.7 million pages of scripts, live broadcast transcripts, and associated documentation for every BBC program over the past five years. On top of this, the system now needs to handle the documentation for all new programs and broadcasts going forward.

SOLUTION

With the department's network upgraded to meet the 2 Terabytes (TB) of disk storage needed to handle the extra workload, it was important to replace the old backup unit with a system that had a proportionate increase in capacity and that could be expanded for future needs. British reseller Digital Performance Systems (DPS) recommended a 26-slot Neo Series™ 2000 from Overland to be directly attached to a Silicon Graphics 300 machine. Storage management software selected



for the task comes from Flashnet, a specialist in backup software for video archive and retrieval projects.

"As a supplier to the BBC News Resources Department, DPS is more than aware of the high demands set for quality, reliable, leading-edge technology," said Gareth Cox, technical manager for DPS. "With its modular, scalable design and proven reliability in the field, DPS was more than happy to recommend the Overland Neo for the BBC's backup requirements."

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RESULTS

Equipped with two SuperDLT drives, the single module Neo tape library provides 2.86TB of back-up capacity—easily handling the back-up needs of the BBC network. The unit can be expanded up to 22.88TB and 16 drives if required in the future.

"We particularly liked the build quality and the expansion capability of the Overland unit," said Dave Bevan, new media support specialist with the BBC. "Overland's ability to deliver this many slots in a 5U unit is certainly very impressive."

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