

SIM INTERNATIONAL IMPROVES STORAGE PERFORMANCE, CUTS STORAGE COSTS BY \$2 MILLION

Company's Post-production Division Meets Customer Demands with Panasas ActiveStor Solution

SUMMARY

CUSTOMER

Sim International

SIZE

550 employees worldwide

LOCATION

Hollywood, California

INDUSTRY

Media and entertainment

CHALLENGE

- Support clients' preference for larger images and higher image density
- Deliver rapid project turnaround and high-service quality at a competitive cost
- Deploy information technology that can scale to meet dynamic customer needs

SOLUTION

- Improved reliability of data access
- Increased storage scalability to support continued business growth
- Accelerated production processes to enable faster customer service

RESULTS

- Cost-effective support for four times the increase in storage volume
- 93 percent reduction in de-archiving processes
- More business growth through better customer service
- Better ability to store high-density media for indeterminate periods of time

Audiences relish the crisp larger-than-life images of high-definition movies and television. For media production companies, however, growing format sizes and increasing image complexity can radically increase costs and slow down production times.

The Sim International Post division, a full-service provider of premium post-production services to the media and entertainment industry, works on episodic television programs such as *Game of Thrones*, theatrical releases such as *The Boondock Saints*, and reality shows such as *American Idol* and *So You Think You Can Dance*. Since its launch in 1996, Sim Post (formerly known as Chainsaw, a member of the SIM Group family of production companies) has grown rapidly by delivering best-in-class digital processing services, including visual effects, finishing, and color grading.

As the industry moved from standard-definition images to high-definition and now ultra-high-definition, or 4K, Sim's storage requirements increased exponentially. "When we work with original camera negatives, file sizes are about 20 percent larger than with standard definition images," says Jeff Sengpiehl, chief engineer at Sim International's Post division. "When clients share digital picture exchange files, it requires four times more storage."

What's more, some projects require Sim to store raw footage and other large files indefinitely. "With episodic productions, the story is filmed and produced," says Sengpiehl. "Once it airs, we can delete the raw material. But reality shows shoot footage and then create the story from it. You never know how long you'll have to retain that media."

Because tight production schedules and budgets favor production houses with rapid turnaround and competitive costs, Sim needed to find a scalable, reliable, and affordable storage solution. "Our client needs drive our technology choices," says Sengpiehl. "In this highly competitive industry, satisfied customers allow us to grow."

"The speed and power of Panasas ActiveStor helps us support our clients' tight production schedules."

Jeff Sengpiehl
Chief Engineer
Sim International Post Division

HIGH QUALITY AT A LOWER COST

After evaluating storage solutions from vendors such as Avid and Nexsan, Sim chose the 400TB Panasas® ActiveStor® solution to store large data files, support transcoding, and execute digital conform processes.

While testing the various vendors, Sim had experienced a power failure. "We needed to reinitialize one of the other shared-access storage products, but Panasas had no problem at all," says Sengpiehl. "Each chassis has its own battery that kicks in when the power goes off, so there is no data corruption. With other products, we would have lost our data. Panasas offers a more intelligent solution that delivers better reliability."



Easy Deployment

From its original Panasas deployment of six ActiveStor appliances, Sim easily added two more ActiveStor appliances to meet customer demand. "We don't need to dedicate special hardware to use Panasas," says Sengpiehl. "When we need more storage, we just deploy it and go."

More Media

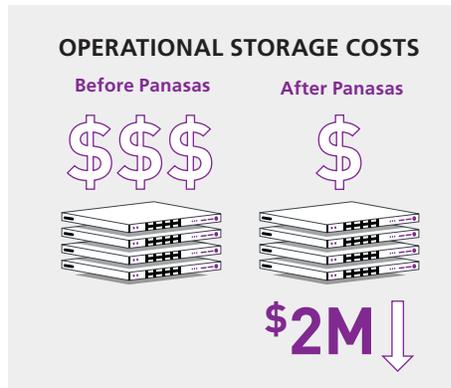
Choosing the Panasas solution helped Sim save money. Comparable spinning-disk products would have cost at least \$2 million more than the Panasas solution. Using the Panasas solution to store long-term archived media assets also frees up more expensive media for profitable new projects.

Faster Processing

After clients edit lower-resolution file-based video footage, they send their files and projects to Sim for postprocessing and

finishing. With the ActiveStor solution, Sim can quickly de-archive and align high-resolution video assets with client projects and files.

"We can get a cut at 8 p.m. and have the media online for client review by the next morning," says Sengpiehl. "The speed and power of ActiveStor helps us support our clients' tight production schedules."



FOUNDATION FOR GROWTH

As client demand continues to grow, Sim expects to use its Panasas solution to support a growing set of post-production services. "Panasas is not a one-trick pony like some other storage products," says Sengpiehl. "The company's solutions do many things exceptionally well. ActiveStor will help us expand our post-production services offerings so we can stay ahead of the changing demands of the media and entertainment business."

To learn more about how the Panasas ActiveStor solution helps media and entertainment companies work more efficiently and cost-effectively, visit www.panasas.com.