



CASE STUDY

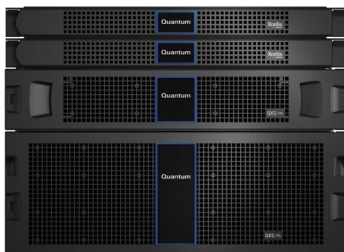
Leading London Post-Production House Scales Up for 4K with Quantum StorNext

A combination of rapid growth and new 4K work meant that London-based post house Fifty Fifty was outgrowing its storage systems. The solution was adding an Xcellis® Foundation system. StorNext® empowers the company do all 4K finishing at high speed from shared storage, and fully automates archiving and retrieval.



FEATURED PRODUCTS

Xcellis, Powered by StorNext



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Alex Meade
Operations Director, Fifty Fifty



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SOLUTION OVERVIEW

- Xcellis workflow storage, powered by StorNext software, and QXS™ storage (160 TB useable) for work in process portion of workflow
- Scalar® i3 LTO tape storage for media archive

KEY BENEFITS

- StorNext performance easily handles 4K finishing from shared storage, eliminating manual movement of data and speeding up operations.
- Automated archive function uses policies to copy files and move content between disk and tape tiers.
- Direct access to archived content through file system interface gives entire team direct, seamless access to existing projects.
- Compatibility with existing applications and processes preserves customer’s investment and eliminates learning curve delays.
- Scalability provides flexible growth to meet future demands.
- Strong support from Quantum and partner Digital Garage provides easy installation and effective on-going service.

London-based Fifty Fifty Post Production is an independently owned post house based in a 1740-built Georgian townhouse in the heart of Soho. Through almost a decade and a half of work, the company has earned a reputation for creativity and reliability, and has amassed a customer list that ranges from Animal Planet and the BBC to Netflix and UFC. Throughout the company’s growth, Fifty Fifty has prided itself on maintaining the feel of a friendly, boutique-style post house where the customer and the work come first.

Keeping up with technology has been an important part of Fifty Fifty’s strategy, and the company now offers a full range of services with 16 Avid offline suites, Baselight color grading, Flame compositing, and Avid Symphony, as well as an audio suite with Avid Pro Tools digital audio workstation and S6 mixing desk. An expansion in the summer of 2017, along with an increase in projects in 4K and 6K formats, prompted the company to look at upgrading its infrastructure and workflows.

LOOKING FOR AN UPGRADE FOR PERFORMANCE AND AUTOMATION

In its old system, Fifty Fifty used Avid ISIS 5500 storage for online work, some NAS-connected nearline disk and an LTO-5 library for archiving. The system had worked well for traditional broadcast HD workflows but struggled to handle 4K work, and the company found itself outsourcing some of those operations. The archive system was also slow, requiring manual intervention to both store work on tape and to retrieve it for re-use.

As the team looked for a new solution, they placed a priority on increasing performance to handle all of the higher resolution work in house, and on automating the archiving function to reduce administration overhead and make it faster and easier to access existing content. It was also critical to find a system that could maintain all of the company’s existing applications and processes, and grow in the future to meet new demands.

SEARCH LEADS TO QUANTUM STORNEXT

Alex Meade, Operations Director at Fifty Fifty, who explored all the market alternatives, explains. “We were looking for a storage solution we could use as a tool across the business—where the production team as well as the technical team could have direct access to content—and that from a creative application point of view was vendor-agnostic. We were looking for ease of use, the ability to fulfil the immediacy of our DI storage solution, future-proofing for 4K and HDR resolutions, and a fully automated robotic LTO archive system.”

Meade found exactly what he wanted in the Quantum Xcellis Foundation storage solution. This appliance-based system includes the StorNext 6 file system, an Xcellis workflow storage system with 192 TB of high-performance RAID and a Quantum Scalar i3 LTO-7 library as an archive. StorNext software provides a high-performance storage environment where multiple workstations and post-production operations access a common set of files over Fibre Channel or high-bandwidth Ethernet networks. It even supports multiple operations simultaneously on the same files. The Xcellis workflow storage platform provides an appliance-based architecture that makes the system easy to install, scale and maintain.

Fifty Fifty’s Quantum solution also includes StorNext Storage Manager software, which automatically makes copies of files and moves content between disk and tape to create an active archive. When StorNext moves files, it leaves pointers or stub files in the original location so that users can access archived material by simply selecting it, exactly as they do for files on disk. When a file is requested, StorNext automatically locates it on tape and moves it back to disk.

NEW SYSTEM FITS IN EASILY WITH EXISTING STORAGE

The new StorNext and Xcellis solution operates side-by-side with the company’s existing storage system. “The backbone of our Avid workflow is still the ISIS 5500,” Meade says. “The StorNext

system is a new investment that complements what we already have, adding high performance finishing workflow and automated archive.”

“The Quantum StorNext is connected to our Baselight grading suite and also our Flame and Symphony online suites—all with a 10 GB connection—so they can share media. So, for 4K finishing, we’re not moving around terabytes of media within stand-alone islands of storage any more. This allows us the versatility and the speed to deliver fast turn-around projects for our customers.”

CHOICE BASED ON TECHNOLOGY AND BRAND

Meade explains that the selection of StorNext was based both on the strength of the technology and the expertise of Quantum as a supplier: “We’re very confident in the robustness of the storage. And just as important, Quantum has a very good reputation that made them instantly attractive.

“They’re a big company who’ve built their reputation on the reliability of their storage and specifically working in the media environment. Quantum manufactures their own storage and have the expertise within it to tailor it to the applications we require. They have shown they have expertise in the media and broadcast sector and they’ve adapted well from a traditional IT background to the requirements of media production.”

A PERFECT INSTALLATION

Installing the new system and making it work in the existing Fifty Fifty environment was seamless. “The install by Quantum was really well managed, and we worked closely with them and our supplier, Digital Garage. They helped us with the advance planning to make sure all the infrastructure was in place and ready for the integration. The StorNext install went really smoothly. There was no down time in any of our working environments – none at all – and the day after the install was complete, we were migrating media on to the storage and working with it straight away. It couldn’t have been better.”

“Quantum certainly went the extra mile and are still going the extra mile. They’ve supported us throughout the design and build, and the after-sales support is ongoing so we can get the maximum efficiency and use out of our StorNext.”

Alex Meade
Operations Director,
Fifty Fifty

ABOUT FIFTY FIFTY POST PRODUCTION

Fifty Fifty Post Production is a full-service, independently owned post-production house based in the heart of London’s Soho. The company specializes in long- and short-form programming, and provides a wide range of services to the broadcast, advertising, corporate and content distribution markets. Fifty Fifty prides itself on taking a personal approach to post production, first getting to know clients and their needs, and then designing customized workflows to maximize efficiency and reduce costs.



“Quantum certainly went the extra mile and are still going the extra mile. They’ve supported us throughout the design and build, and the after-sales support is ongoing so we can get the maximum efficiency and use out of our StorNext. We’ve had no issues with the storage and archiving at all.”

FUTURE WILL BRING MORE AND MORE DATA

“The key driver for us was working towards a 4K future,” Meade continues. “StorNext gives us the performance to run all of our 4K finishing suites centrally from our shared storage, a tremendous improvement over our old system that is allowing us to finish work much faster.”

StorNext’s easy scalability was also important for Fifty Fifty. “We’re well aware that storage gets used up no matter how good you are at media management and how well you plan. There’s always a point where you need more storage, and it was important to us we had a scalable piece of hardware that could also increase speed when we need it to for any future requirements in this ever-changing media environment.”

Quantum

Quantum technology and services help customers capture, create, and share digital content—and preserve and protect it for decades at the lowest cost. Quantum’s platforms provide the fastest performance for high-resolution video, images, and industrial IoT, with solutions built for every stage of the data lifecycle, from high-performance ingest to real-time collaboration and analysis and low-cost archiving. Every day the world’s leading entertainment companies, sports franchises, research scientists, government agencies, enterprises, and cloud providers are making the world happier, safer, and smarter on Quantum. See how at www.quantum.com.

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