ATTO Technology and DIGISTOR Collaborate to Bring SAN Solution to SOUNDFIRM

*Leaders in High-capacity Storage
are the Powers Behind the
Music Down Under*

Most moviegoers take the sound for granted unless, of course, something doesn't sound quite right - the audio doesn't seem in sync with the video or it just doesn't seem to flow smoothly. Inferior sound at a movie can be very disconcerting. Viewers who found themselves laughing through *Babe*, crying through *Muriel's Wedding* and charmed by *Moulin Rouge* probably weren't alone. Now think if they would have had those same reactions had the sound not been up to par. Probably not. Moviegoers may not have realized it, but, they were experiencing sound done right. Now learn how it was done.

SOUNDFIRM - a leading audio post-production facility at Fox Studios in Sydney, Australia, found the perfect "mix." Realizing that quality sound is imperative in the movie industry and the importance of easy access to audio files by sound engineers, SOUNDFIRM knew all too well that the magnitude of their files called for a more advanced solution than they were implementing. They called on the assistance of DIGISTOR. DIGISTOR heard the call and wasted no time in implementing a system that would do what they knew to be crucial to SOUNDFIRM's success - provide high-quality sound for the motion picture industry.

DIGISTOR - a leader in high-capacity digital storage solutions, has recently made significant inroads into the post-production market with the addition of ATTO AccelWare and ATTO ExpressPCI Fibre Channel Host Bus Adapters (HBAs). A recent installation of an ATTO-driven Storage Area Network (SAN) and a DIGISTOR SANman RAID controller at SOUNDFIRM afforded this post-production house the ability to focus on its core competency.

A SAN is an independent network for storage devices that removes the storage from the server. In effect, such a setup allows any workstation to be connected to any storage device. In other words, a user may be granted access to any storage device on the SAN, regardless of the physical location of the storage or the user.

"Why limit what we know to be a proven winner to our Sydney operation?" states Ian McLoughlin of SOUNDFIRM. "Implementing a SAN in our Melbourne facility will take us to the next level in working with other leaders in the motion picture industry. We've been able to penetrate a very competitive industry and owe that, in part, to our SAN set up. It's proven to be a "sound" investment."

SOUNDFIRM has linked its main audio mixing suites to a large pool of redundant storage via a proprietary DIGISTOR SANman RAID controller and ATTO's AccelWare Volume Management Software and Fibre Channel HBAs. This initiative has improved SOUNDFIRM's workflow and increased its productivity by allowing multiple users to simultaneously access centrally stored audio files.

"Our clients are finally seeing the benefits of working in a collaborative environment sharing their audio and video files across the SAN," states Andrew Mooney of DIGISTOR. "The time saved by allowing files to be shared simultaneously has allowed SOUNDFIRM to realize the full potential of a Storage Area Network. Not only has production increased, but file integrity is at an all-time high. No more wondering if they're working with the most recent file. We, at DIGISTOR, by incorporating industry-leading ATTO SAN products, have assured SOUNDFIRM of that."

The installed Fibre Channel-based SAN solution includes ATTO AccelWare Volume Management Software that oversees and controls user access to stored data for the entire SAN. Running in the background, ATTO AccelWare delivers valuable benefits by empowering an audio post-production house with the tools to help maintain data integrity - while increasing efficiency, productivity and profitability. The AccelWare software gives SOUNDFIRM the ability to manage its storage in a manner that improves its workflow and eliminates downtime while waiting for files to copy across traditional networks. The SOUNDFIRM SAN currently comprises three Apple Macintosh® workstations, ATTO's Fibre Channel HBAs, ATTO AccelWare Volume Management Software, and DIGISTOR's SANman controller with an in-built four-port switch. Future expansion is planned with the introduction of the ATTO FibreCenter™, a five-port hub that serves as a high-speed, central connection point for data sharing in Fibre Channel Arbitrated Loop (FC-AL) configurations.

In audio post-production environments, easy and simultaneous access to carefully stored audio files is a major concern. This factor can be addressed by installing an ATTO-driven SAN solution and DIGISTOR SANman Controller; coupled together, they provide shared high-speed storage in a multi-user environment that allows these establishments to concentrate on their core competencies, and thus maintain a competitive edge.

"Now that SOUNDFIRM has experienced the benefits of a shared storage environment in the Sydney studio, they are planning a SAN for their Melbourne facility,"states Andrew Mooney of DIGISTOR.

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DIGISTOR and ATTO work to provide data-connectivity solutions to today's leading audio- and video-production houses. Today's requirements for post-production in terms of tight deadlines and shrinking budgets put considerable strain on the post-production facilities. Having a shared storage solution was critical for SOUNDFIRM in order to meet its deadlines and maintain a flexible editing environment.

DIGISTOR specializes in providing digital-storage solutions for the broadcast and post-production markets. With a strong background in broadcast television and a thorough knowledge of SCSI and Fibre Channel technologies, DIGISTOR provides customers with the best storage solution for their application and budget. This can be anything from a simple SCSI drive to a large SAN.

Looking to improve your data integrity and reliability plus allow simultaneous access by many users? Look no further than a Storage Area Network. SANs are gaining wide acceptance in the fields of video and audio post-production. For anyone wondering about the inherent benefits of implementing a SAN into their workplace, it may pay to heed the words of Ian McLoughlin from SOUNDFIRM, "It's a sound investment."

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