Qumulo

Media & Entertainment

Sportvision Scores with Qumulo's Modern Scale-Out Storage

Sportvision, the media company behind the iconic 1st & Ten® yellow line in football broadcasts, offers a broad range of rich sports entertainment and analysis products that rely on vast amounts of video and metadata. When struggling with storage capacity and data management at scale, the company turned to Qumulo to gain the necessary visibility into data usage and performance.

Outdated Tape Storage Delays the Game

Sportvision is the nation's premier innovator of sports and entertainment products, delivering cutting-edge broadcast graphics, visual effects and statistical data to professional sports leagues, networks, marketers and fans.

Known for such innovations as the iconic 1st & Ten yellow line superimposed during football game broadcasts, the company manages an array of data-heavy assets including video, audio, still images and statistics, as well as metadata corresponding to all of these assets.

In the last few years, Sportvision began placing a heightened emphasis on the data services aspect of its business—storing a vast catalogue of proprietary sports statistics and video, and later selling this information for use in sports broadcasts, web-based content and consumer mobile apps. Teams also purchase these statistics for scouting, player development and other purposes, placing a heavy burden on Sportvision to track and quickly access file metadata.

With a single game often consuming 2-3TB of storage, capacity management and cost increasingly became a strategic business and IT issue. As IT struggled to keep assets online and available for developers, the company relied heavily on tape-based storage to try to cost-effectively handle the sheer volume of data being ingested.

"But tape was designed to be an archival solution said Grant Turner, IT Manager at Sportvision.

Consequently, management of these assets proved to be labor-intensive, especially when determining if certain files should be taken offline for long-term storage. There was no simple way to establish who was actively working with which files, or how recently and frequently certain files were being used.

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>
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> IT Manager, Sportvision

Turner knew the company should move to a scale-out file storage system for better performance, but legacy scale-out NAS technologies still wouldn't provide the necessary visibility they needed into the data and storage. And with the huge quantities of data it was ingesting on a daily basis, Sportvision needed to find a superior technical solution for its business.

Solution Overview

- 8 Qumulo QC24 hybrid storage appliances
- 1 Arista 10GbE switch
- NFS and SMB protocols
- Qumulo Care enterprise support

Key Benefits for Sportvision

- Provides unmatched real-time visibility into data and usage at the file-level
- Delivers insight into performance consumption to ensure adequate IOPS
- Scales incrementally, allowing the company to simply grow storage capacity and performance by adding more nodes
- Decreases costs through commodity hardware and all features included in the Qumulo Core software
- Responds to IT demands through bi-weekly iterative software releases and proactive Qumulo Care support

IT Staff Champions the Adoption of Qumulo

The company narrowed its choice down to two contenders. Ultimately, the other contender was eliminated due to inadequate scale-out capabilities, and because users must separately purchase many of its software features and tools on an a la carte basis.

Qumulo offered a modern approach to scale-out storage, delivering fast, flexible and highly scalable storage together with the real-time analytics necessary for visibility into data usage and performance at petabyte scale. "Philosophically, we don't like to get locked into vendors, and we try to always work with readily available off-the-shelf hardware. Qumulo shares that same philosophy, making it a great fit for us," notes Turner.

Moreover, Qumulo's state-of-the-art features are simply incorporated into its core software, and new capabilities are quickly added via bi-weekly software development and release cycles. "I really liked that Qumulo's feature set grows with the system," explains Turner.

But most important for Sportvision was Qumulo's intuitive real-time analytics built directly into the file system to make data visible. With Qumulo, IT and users can analyze storage capacity and performance, determine what projects or directories are growing the fastest, assess which users or applications are consuming the most resources, and much more. All of which promised to directly address Sportvision's need for capacity management, planning, and keeping the most important assets online for developers.

The company initially purchased a four-node Qumulo QC24 scale-out NAS hybrid appliance cluster, which quickly doubled to become an eight-node cluster with 192 terabytes of raw storage capacity.

Better Data Visibility Helps Sportvision Innovate

The improved data visibility built into Qumulo's modern scale-out storage has provided immediate and tangible business benefits for Sportvision.

"One of our big issues was that a lot of data gets put into centralized storage, and it was difficult to determine an exact usage pattern," says Turner. "What has us really excited about Qumulo Core is that now we can quickly determine what to save and what can be archived. I can keep track of what data and directories are hot, what are we working on right now, what's not been touched in 6 months or a year. That gives us a level of visibility we just didn't have before."

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As importantly, understanding those data usage trends gives Sportvision a critical view into system performance. "With Qumulo we can readily determine who is really hitting a system and make sure that system gets the necessary IOPS. And conversely what's not taxing the system. That insight into IT data and storage management is huge for us," says Turner.

These analytics also facilitate workflow for the company's expanding business built around sports statistics and video by giving ready access to key metadata. "We can get a request for a specific team and player, and quickly identify and pull individual clips from multiple camera angles for viewing," explains Turner.

Qumulo's two-week software development and release cycles have also proven to be a benefit for Sportvision. "From my perspective it points out two things: first, the software is being actively maintained, not left to grow stale. It also means we can provide feedback to Qumulo that we'd like to see a certain change – and then see the results in the software within 2-4 weeks. That sort of iterative responsiveness really tells me the company and its engineers are listening to customers," he adds.

And Turner has found an added benefit in the organization's experiences with Qumulo Care support, particularly its remote monitoring. "I'm pulled in 10 different directions, keeping visibility on every system can sometimes be difficult," explains Turner. "So getting an email from the Qumulo Care team basically saying 'we had a situation where Qumulo engineers noticed a power supply was not functioning and causing a performance issue with the cluster. They promptly notified me and worked with us to get a new power supply, They also let us know the status of the performance bug and when it would be fixed. – that sort of initiative is really helpful for any IT team."

Sportvision, Inc. is the nation's premier innovator of sports and entertainment products for fans, media companies and marketers. Sportvision solutions have enhanced experiences for fans and marketing partners of the NFL, MLB, NASCAR, The Olympic Games, NHL, PGA TOUR, LPGA Tour, NBA, NCAA, WTA, MLS, IRL, X Games, America's Cup and other sporting events On-Air and online. As sports fans demand richer and fuller entertainment experiences, Sportvision delivers a heightened sports-viewing experience across all forms of media. Sportvision has deployed products across live television, internet and iTV for all major sports on all major U.S. networks, including ESPN, ABC, Fox, CBS, NBC, USA, Turner, NFL Network, CBC (Canada), Seven Network (Australia), TV Asahi (Japan), MBC (Korea). See more at: http://www.sportvision.com.

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