London Base for World's First Digital Screen Network



"…a state of the art digital cinema projection and presentation equipment . . . The Infortrend A08U-G2421 was selected for its smaller physical size (2RU chassis), SATA II technology, high quality support"

Business:	*Digital content and management company based in London*
Challenge:	*Establish a network of 250 digital cinema screens with equipment mounted in confined space*
Solution:	*EonStor® RAID subsystems met the challenge for:* *- high sustained bandwidth* *- small physical size* *- SATA II technology* *- excellent support*

ARTS ALLIANCE MEDIA

The company is a London based, digital content management and delivery company in the film industry, with software and services aimed at businesses and consumers. Arts Alliance Digital Cinema is a wholly owned subsidiary of AAM, providing Digital Cinema software, logistics, integration, service & support. In February 2005 AADC were awarded a contract from the UK Film Council (UKFC) to build and operate the Digital Screen Network (DSN). The DSN is a key part of The UK Film Council's strategy for broadening the range of films available to audiences throughout the UK and especially improving access to specialised film. Announcing details of the network, John Woodward, the UK Film Council's Chief Executive Officer said that the Digital Screen Network will change the face of cinema-going right across the UK.
"This initiative is a world first for the UK and is a hugely exciting and significant development for British cinema and cinema-goers."

GROUND BREAKING CHALLENGES

Ray Quattromini, MD of Fortuna Power Systems was tasked with developing technical solutions to meet the requirements of the emerging Digital Cinema industry. "This ambitious and ground breaking project will consist of a network of up to 250 screens, located in approximately 200 cinemas" said Ray. "Each cinema will be provided with a system offering state of the art digital cinema

projection and presentation equipment. The contract award includes all installation, training, maintenance and content distribution. It will be the first full scale digital cinema network in the world."

STAR SOLUTION

Each cinema screen will have a RAID subsystem, configured for between 750GB and 1.5TB of storage, equating to up to 24 hours of digital cinema content. "We selected the Infortrend EonStor A08U-G2421 SATA based array" said Ray. "The brief was to find a product with dual host SCSI interfaces and with no more than a 2RU form factor. This was because all the equipment had to fit within a small rack mounting area provided in the Digital Cinema projector, and space was at a premium."

The storage is connected to QuVIS Cinema Players by dual host VHDCI SCSI interfaces. Each array is configured as a RAID5 volume split into two partitions – one mapped to each SCSI port. Each system includes a hot spare drive in addition to the RAID5 volume. The arrays are being used to store the actual digital film content at each site. The decision to use an external array was made to allow more flexibility, increased storage capacity and improved reliability. As the RAID storage was going to be crucial to the project, an initial evaluation took place in October 2004 for about a month prior to a "proof of solution" demonstration of the entire system to the UKFC.

Once the contract was awarded, a more thorough evaluation of the RAID subsystem was undertaken, including side-by-side comparisons with equipment from other companies. In evaluating RAID storage from various manufacturers, the most important factors were; sustained bandwidth, reliability, physical size, and ease of serviceability. The Infortrend A08U-G2421 was selected for its smaller physical size (2RU chassis), SATA II technology, high quality support from Fortuna and impressive secondary support from Infortrend.

Fortuna Power Systems provided advice on suitable product and comprehensive technical help to optimize the setup of the array. Fortuna also configured the systems to AAM specifications, so that they are ready to install as soon as they are received.

MORE SATISFIED CUSTOMERS

AAM have only just started rolling out systems into the field, but they anticipate that the use of the Infortrend RAID subsystems will lead to increased reliability and ease of recovery from disk failure, resulting in reduced service costs and more satisfied customers. It also allows AAM to offer increased storage volume to their customers. "We will also be able to make full use of the remote administration functions to get an early warning of imminent disk failures before they cause a lost show at a cinema" said Ray.

FUTURE SHOWINGS

"We are in talks with other organizations about setting up other digital cinema networks in Europe and beyond" said Ray. "We are will continue to use Infortrend RAID products to provide the critical storage necessary at cinemas"

ABOUT FORTUNA POWER SYSTEMS

Fortuna Power Systems are one of the UK's leading Data Storage Solutions suppliers and based in Basingstoke, Hampshire. Founded in 1994, they are a BS EN ISO 9001:2000 supplier and work closely with many leading Data storage manufacturers to provide leading edge solutions for their clients.

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