

Nexsan 10 Minute Case Study



Visual Effects Studio Accelerates Backup and Reduces Operating Costs with Nexsan

A Nexsan 10 Min. Case Study on CIS Hollywood

Quick Summary

CIS Hollywood needed to assure the reliable and cost-efficient protection of hundreds of terabytes of production digital video, yet its tape-based backup process was cumbersome and time consuming. The award winning visual effects studio implemented Nexsan SATABoy highly efficient storage systems to accelerate its backup infrastructure, optimize its data center space and reduce operating costs.





“Nexsan’s high performance storage system allowed us to eliminate a cumbersome and time consuming tape-based backup process. Because data center space in our facility is at a premium, the high density Nexsan storage chassis also allowed us to protect more data without extensive use of rack space.”

Matt Ashton, Director of IT, CIS Hollywood

ENVIRONMENT

- Hundreds of TBs of data
- BlueArc, Isilon, NetApp, and SGI Servers
- Nexsan SATABoy

NEXSAN HIGHLY EFFICIENT STORAGE BENEFITS

- High performance backup and recovery
- Simplified operation of the backup and recovery process
- High density storage for space efficiency

CUSTOMER OVERVIEW

CIS is an award-winning international visual effects entity servicing high-end feature film, television, commercial and gaming clients. Founded in 1984, the organization has worked on such major motion pictures as Pirates of the Caribbean, Speed Racer, GI Joe and Invictus. In early 2008, the company expanded by acquiring Rainmaker Visual Effects and is now comprised of CIS Hollywood, CIS Vancouver and CIS London.

With its unique global footprint and boutique accessibility, the company has the capacity to service its clientele wherever production is situated. CIS Visual Effects Group is a division of Deluxe Entertainment Services Group Inc., a wholly-owned subsidiary of MacAndrews & Forbes Holdings Inc.

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Eliminate the cost, complexity and risk of tape backup system with high-performance disk based storage

As a popular visual effects studio, CIS Hollywood was seeing exponential data growth which required secure storage. Yet, using a traditional tape backup solution was hindering the studio’s productivity. Post production video content was being backed up on tape, and, as a result, the IT department was spending hundreds of hours on redundant and complex tape management tasks. Because production downtime is very costly for CIS, recovery failures from backup tapes cost the company time, money and risk to future business.



SATABOY BENEFITS FOR CIS:

- **High performance.** SATABoy incorporates advanced features such as dual RAID engines, a high performance cache mirroring ASIC, and active/active failover to deliver uncompromising availability and reliability, feature rich functionality, and high performance. With sustained throughput speeds of up to 540 MB/s per controller, SATABoy provides superior performance across all standard platforms and operating systems;
- **High reliability.** SATABoy offers redundant and individually hot-swappable active components (RAID controllers, fans, power supplies and disks). Further, they offer industry leading system reliability with an innovative design in vibration reduction and cooling;
- **“Single pane of glass” management.** SATABoy supports management in one, central location through a simplified management console without the need for special agents or capacity keys;
- **Highly efficient storage for backup and recovery.** The SATABoy features 14 drives in 3U. It is designed with very energy efficient components thereby reducing power and cooling requirements. SATABoy also comes standard with AutoMAID energy saving technology which reduces power consumption and cooling without penalizing storage performance.

“The Nexsan storage systems have demonstrated a true competitive advantage over alternative storage systems vendors. Nexsan systems have proven to be both very reliable and high performing. They have been a superior addition to our IT infrastructure.”

Matt Ashton, Director of IT, CIS Hollywood

“Tape backup was painful to deal with because it was complex to reliably restore files after having lost critical data,” said Matt Ashton, director of IT, CIS Hollywood. “It would take hours to perform recoveries from tape — draining our staff resources. The process was slow and unreliable.”

With its data center space at a premium, CIS also wanted to optimize its storage facility space while cost effectively protecting hundreds of terabytes of production digital video. The visual effects studio required a cost efficient solution to deliver the necessary performance and reliability while optimizing space and reducing management costs

SOLUTION: NEXSAN SATABOY FOR RELIABLE, HIGH PERFORMANCE DISK BACKUP

CIS selected to deploy Nexsan SATABoy storage systems connected directly to its SGI servers. The Nexsan solutions were chosen for their exceptional reliability as well as value in the areas of power efficiency, space efficiency and cost efficiency over alternative disk-based storage solutions CIS evaluated. The Nexsan systems ensure reliable business continuity with excellent performance and easy to use backup and recovery operations.

“Nexsan’s high performance storage system allowed us to eliminate a cumbersome and time consuming tape based backup process,” said Ashton. “The SATABOYS are reliable and easy to operate which has reduced our system management requirements while giving us the peace of mind that there is a good backup at all times.”



AUTOMAID™ ENERGY SAVING TECHNOLOGY

Nexsan's revolutionary AutoMAID (Automatic Massive Array of Idle Disks) energy saving technology transparently places disk drives into an idle state to vastly reduce power and cooling costs. AutoMAID delivers the cost-effective benefits of MAID 2.0 without the limitations of slow access times and special host software.

- AutoMAID reduces power and cooling costs
- Nexsan's AutoMAID delivers the benefits of MAID without the performance limitations
- Available on all Nexsan products

AUTOMAID SAFETY FEATURES

- In maximum power saving mode, drive spin up is sequenced to reduce power surges
- Drives automatically wake up for periodic surface scan to ensure data integrity (user configurable)
- AutoMAID can be used with data-intensive server applications by delivering energy savings without performance compromise

RESULTS: ACCELERATED BACKUP AND REDUCED OPERATING COSTS

The Nexsan SATABoy systems have provided CIS with unparalleled storage performance to meet their business objectives. The highly scalable SATABoys enable cost efficient storage of large amounts of CIS information to remain online. The systems' exceptional performance ensures faster backup and recovery of data for the studio's mission critical applications. Storage systems are also equally capable of delivering high IOPS and sustained maximum MB/s throughput for CIS's high bandwidth applications.

The storage density of these systems has reduced the need to expand CIS's data center extending the useful life of their current facility. The SATABoy also simplified management operations which, in turn, reduced overall costs by freeing up staff resources for other IT tasks.

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Presented by Nexsan Technologies

About Nexsan

Nexsan Corporation is a leading provider of energy-efficient, long-term storage systems. Nexsan delivers secure storage appliances and modular, capacity-optimized disk-storage systems for a broad range of applications including fixed content storage and archiving, email, medical imaging, compliance and litigation support, disk-based backup, digital video security, and rich media.

Nexsan's solutions are the choice of small and medium-sized companies as well as large global enterprises and major governmental agencies around the world who are seeking cost-correct, high density storage solutions. Founded in 1999 and based in Thousand, Oaks, Calif., Nexsan sells its products exclusively through a select global network of VARs, OEMs and system integrators. For more information, please see the company's website at www.nexsan.com



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