



Hillsong Church improves workflow with the DDP

In order to share content with multiple suites simultaneously and provide multi-camera feed access for television production suites, Hillsong Church now uses the DDP to record, post-produce and distribute a wide range of concerts, conferences and performances to its followers around the world.

Headquartered in Sydney's Hills district with its operations spread across Australia and ten other countries, Hillsong creates content for television programming, DVDs and CDs to help communicate with a global audience.



Major Issues with Xsan

Luke Irvine, Hillsong's television technical manager, called in Digistor when the aging Apple Xsan storage system used to store all production material began to falter.

"We had major issues with the Xsan because we needed more storage and its drives were failing", explained Irvine. "We needed to replace it quickly and upgrade to a bigger system because the Xsan was starting to impact our workflow and we were losing important media."

Irvine had researched various storage options and had a wish-list to cover his requirements for the 14 suites using iMacs running a mix of Final Cut Pro and Adobe editing and compositing software.

"I wanted an all-in-one system capable of sharing content simultaneously with multiple suites and for the the five television production suites to be able to access multi-camera feeds. I was also looking for ease of use and the ability to add additional workstations without difficulty. And it had to be affordable to suit our budget. I found a few systems and talked to several vendors, but Digistor's solution looked a lot better."



"An all-in-one system capable of sharing content"

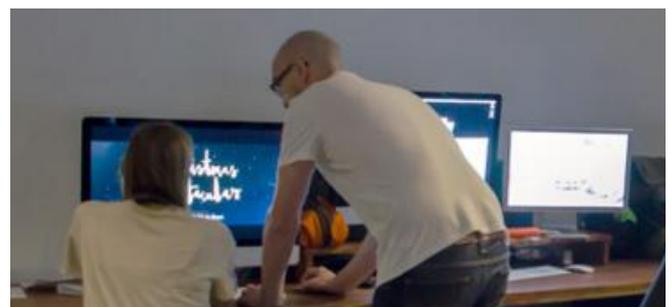
Digistor Consultative Approach

Irvine appreciated the company's consultative approach and ability to offer a range of products rather than pushing a one vendor solution.

"Other vendors took a stock standard approach of saying here is the equipment and this is the price whereas Digistor suggested options and then recommended one solution that best suited our operations. Matt and his team work with you and I felt they talked to DDP to make the deal work."

Digistor Senior Sales Consultant Matt Wood listened to Irvine's initial enquiry, noted his needs and was able to match the brief with a superior Dynamic Drive Pool (DDP) ethernet SAN solution from Ardis Technologies.

"Digistor organised a webinar online demonstration to show me what the DDP system could do and how it could work within the existing infrastructure. I wanted to double the existing 40Tb storage, but Matt explained that one DDP product had a 48 bay chassis that could offer up to 120Tb of usable space so that was even better."



High Speed Project and File Sharing Over Ethernet

The benefits of a DDP system suited Hillsong Church as it delivers high speed project and file sharing over standard ethernet without the expense of fibre channel options. With iSCSI connectors fitted to the workstations, standard Gigabit ethernet ports can be paired together to increase the bandwidth from 100 to 180 MB/s. Optional 10 GbE ports can also be combined.

Additionally DDP products offered the functionality of easy to set permissions for the variety of users connecting to the Hillsong network.



"We left the Xsan running for a month to ensure we could go back to it if we had to then shut it down for a month before taking it apart," said Irvine. "The whole process was quite easy because we already had a large rack for the Xsan so the DDP unit fitted straight into our main server room.

"Our workflow is a lot faster now so we can do multi-cam editing which we couldn't do before because the Xsan issues limited our bandwidth to cuts only editing. The best part is that the new storage just sits there and does its thing without any problem and importantly we can easily expand it in the future."



Two Week Turnaround

It took just two weeks from placing an order to installation for Digistor to rescue Hillsong Church from an impending digital disaster by delivering a fast and expanded storage system.

Digistor's proven experience in migrating customers from legacy Xsan systems enabled its engineers to move very quickly and avoid the real possibility of serious data loss.

"I was very comfortable with the process and they were very helpful - they had all the information I needed and were always available, before and after, to discuss any issues."



Digistor Benchmarking and Load Testing

With no time to spare the Digistor team set up an ARDIS DDP48D system and put it through benchmark load testing by simulating its targeted working environment before delivery.

"We sometimes bring in freelance editors for different projects and if our suites are busy we can hire in additional Macs or the editors can bring in their own laptops," said Irvine. "With DDP it is easy to manage the list of users, add in extra people and assign read/write permissions to ensure they can access the correct folders. And because it uses standard ethernet protocols the DDP storage shows up on each desktop as one local drive with normal read and write access. Initially we set it up as folder volumes to match the Xsan but then we changed to simply having everyone seeing the one volume. It was quick and easy to change over without having to do any formatting which was great."

Data Migration and Installation Services

Digistor's technical engineers assisted Irvine with the installation by configuring a workstation to connect between the dying Xsan and new DDP storage. Irvine began the two day process of migrating his data and connecting the suites to the new storage. Digistor confirmed all suites and remote sites were correctly connected and achieved targeted throughputs as part of the company's standard project proving and client sign-off process.

"With DDP it is easy to manage the list of users, add in extra people and assign read/write permissions to ensure they can access the correct folders."

