



Intelligent Clustered Storage

Sports Illustrated

Applications

Clustered storage to support Sports Illustrated's move to a 100% digital workflow for their coverage of the 2004 Summer Olympic Games in Athens.

Challenge

For the 2004 Summer Olympic Games in Athens, Sports Illustrated wanted to move from traditional film based photography to a 100% digital workflow that would allow them to increase image quality, publish images faster and save millions of dollars. To accomplish this, SI needed a highly scalable clustered storage solution that allowed editors fast shared access to hundreds of thousands of digital images.

Isilon IQ Benefits

Sports Illustrated evaluated traditional and home-grown storage products and selected Isilon IQ because the system offered:

- Cluster setup time of 30 minutes (compared to their estimate of 3 days for a SAN system) with no storage administration required by SI staffers during the events.
- Unparalleled reliability that freed the SI technical team from having to make manual copies of data.
- Fully scalable and distributed access that allowed every SI editorial team member full access to each and every image via standard Microsoft Windows network protocols.

ISILON IQ CASE STUDY

SPORTS ILLUSTRATED MAKES HISTORY BY CAPTURING 2004 SUMMER GAMES IN ATHENS WITH ALL-DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY

Isilon IQ clustered storage system supports 250,000 digital images over 17 days of the Olympic Games, enabling greater quality and immediacy for 'most breathtaking Olympic coverage in the history of SI'

ISILON ENABLES SPORTS ILLUSTRATED TO MOVE TO 100% DIGITAL WORKFLOW FOR 2004 SUMMER OLYMPIC GAMES

Sports Illustrated, one of the oldest and most popular sporting magazines in the world, is seen by millions of weekly print and on-line readers and has long been a maverick in the use of innovative and breathtaking photography. One of the first publications to liberally use color photographs, Sports Illustrated (SI) also pioneered dramatic shots taken from locations such as behind hockey nets and basketball backboards, and also publishes the world's most popular swimsuit issue.

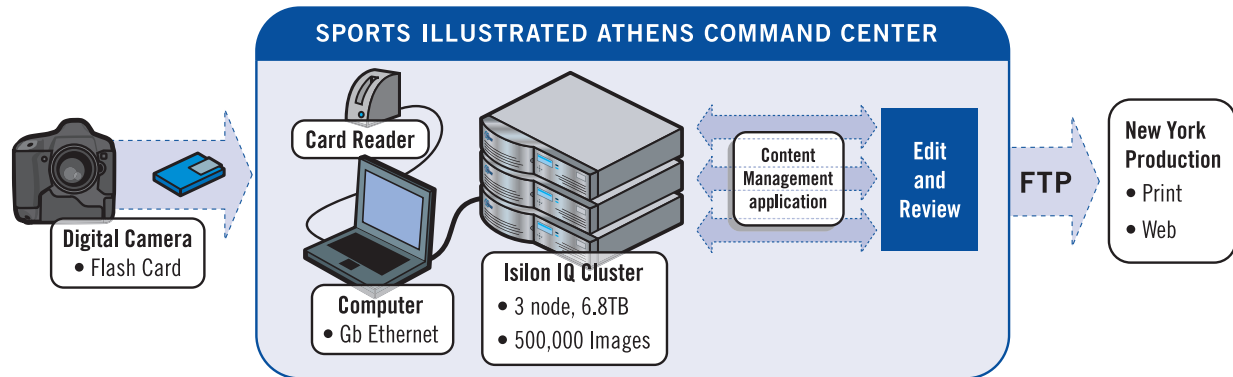
For the 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens, SI editors wanted to continue their historic pace of innovation by adopting a 100% digital workflow and leaving their film, legacy cameras and pallets of processing equipment behind. Their move marks a significant shift towards the innovative use of digital technology to cover events and stands in stark contrast to the 2002 Olympic Games in Salt Lake City, where only five percent of SI's photos were shot digitally while 95 percent were shot using traditional film. The result was a phenomenal increase in image quality and speed of delivery for the millions of consumers worldwide who read SI or visit the hugely popular SI.com web site.

ISILON IQ HELPS SI TO BETTER FOCUS ON THEIR PICTURES

To complete their transformation to a 100% digital workflow in Athens, SI needed to bring advanced image processing and storage to the field. SI turned to Isilon IQ clustered storage systems to satisfy their on-site digital storage needs so that they could concentrate on what they do best – taking, selecting and publishing the best sports photographs in the world.

"By going 100 percent digital for the first time in Olympic history, we saw phenomenal increases in the quality of our photos and at the same time saved millions of dollars. We chose Isilon IQ as the heart of our new digital storage infrastructure because it allows us to simply, reliably and economically store our digital photos, and can scale to enable us to produce the most breathtaking Olympic coverage in the history of SI."

— Phil Jache, Deputy Director of Technology,
Sports Illustrated



“We store images on SANs at our New York headquarters, and they are complex, difficult to manage and we couldn’t imagine bringing them to Athens,” said Phil Jache, Deputy Director of Technology for Sports Illustrated. “Our Isilon IQ system performed exceptionally well – it was set up and operational in under 30 minutes, required no administration, and allowed our editors to easily share and work with our photos.”

In addition to achieving more than \$4 million in cost savings over 2 years by eliminating the need for physical film, processing labs, personnel and travel expenses, centralizing all image storage on 6.8TB of Isilon IQ storage enabled SI to realize improvements in workflow productivity and efficiency that were previously unattainable. With Isilon IQ, SI’s team of expert photographers, editors and producers worked on more than 15,000 new digital photos captured each day across 28 events and 38 different venues, and including more than 10,000 athletes competing from countries all around the world.

Throughout the games, runners continuously delivered full memory cards from the digital cameras in the field to SI’s Olympic command center, where all images were immediately transferred to an Isilon IQ cluster using

standard Windows networking over Gigabit Ethernet. As opposed to previous digital events, such as their coverage of the 2004 National Football League Super Bowl, SI editors no longer were required to manually duplicate files to feel confident they would be preserved. Instead, SI editors relaxed knowing Isilon’s award-winning and patented OneFS™ file system had automatically distributed their data across nodes, removing single points of failure and ensuring images would be available.

ISILON IQ ‘JUST WORKED’

To successfully cover the world’s most popular sporting event, editors flipped through more than one picture every second and found the gems that would appear in the magazine or grace the covers. SI wanted to leave nothing to chance with their storage infrastructure.

Isilon’s high performance clustered storage system provided SI with an unparalleled storage solution for their digital workflow. With modular industry standard hardware and its intelligent distributed file system, Isilon IQ delivered unmatched performance, simplicity and scalability for Sports Illustrated’s Olympic Coverage. In the words of Jache, “It just worked!”

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