

CASE STUDY: B2+

Scalable, Manageable Storage for Media Production with TrueNAS®



“TrueNAS holds everything that we do at this company. It’s become essential to our operations.”

- Reid Ransom
Senior Editor

In 2006, B2+ opened its doors as B2 Studios with the mission to provide a uniquely positive experience for TV Networks and their advertisers. Specializing in branded content, B2+ strives to meet the demands of modern television. Still the most powerful platform for reaching mass audiences, DVR and other on-demand television services give users more control over their TV viewing experience and what advertisements they watch, requiring new strategies for companies to reach their desired audience.

B2+ has been a leader in developing a new breed of advertising to answer that challenge. It provides its customers with complete turnkey Broadcast Branded Entertainment campaigns, delivering up to 80% audience retention.

THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE

As their customer base and number of projects grew, B2+’s storage needs rapidly expanded beyond their current capacity, so they began a search for Network Attached Storage. Originally, they implemented a different NAS storage solution into their network, but it was unstable, didn’t have file-level sharing, and lacked the scalability their growth required. With media so central to its enterprise operations, storage capacity and availability is absolutely critical for everyday operation and the ability to scale with the continued growth of the company an imperative.

With users across five departments and minimal IT staff, B2+ also needed a storage system that was easy to manage. B2+ wanted a system that was simple enough to use that it could be managed by any employee, freeing IT technicians to focus on mission critical operations.

“We didn’t have a dedicated IT person for managing storage, and we needed something that was stable and easy to manage. After trying the FreeNAS interface, I knew anyone would be able to use TrueNAS.”

- Reid Ransom

“The support staff is responsive and very dedicated. They helped us late nights and weekends. It’s been really excellent, actually.”

- Reid Ransom

TrueNAS

- Mirrored ZFS Intent Log (ZIL) for write caching
- High Performance flash-based L2ARC Read Cache
- Expansion Shelf
- 108TB of usable data
- Quad port copper NIC, 4x1GbE LACP configuration

PRIMARY MEDIA STORAGE WITH TRUENAS

After carefully discussing the problem with the iXsystems staff, B2+ decided that TrueNAS could most certainly address their stability, usability, and scalability issues. iXsystems then supplied them with a TrueNAS storage appliance running a SSD-based mirrored ZFS Intent Log (ZIL) for write caching and a 512GB high performance L2ARC Read Cache. The system also uses an expansion shelf.

The system utilizes a quad port copper NIC in a 4x1GbE LACP configuration and a Netgear GSM 248 Switch, providing B2+ with around 800 to 1100 MB/s network bandwidth. The system serves 15 to 20 users -- over five departments -- who all work with the storage on a project-by-project basis. The TrueNAS webGUI also allowed them to manage users and set up their AFP shares with just a few clicks.

B2+ uses the system as its primary storage, storing and serving everything from office documents to ad promotions, but the system is primarily leveraged for large media file transfers. The TrueNAS Archiver storage appliance was able to deliver the kind of throughput needed for users to store and pull files at a moment’s notice, while maintaining steadfast data integrity and stability its predecessor could not provide.

The TrueNAS sales and technical staff worked with B2+ from the outset, helping them tailor and configure a system to fit their needs. On the rare occasion that issues arose, the support staff was on call to walk them through configuration guidelines and help pinpoint solutions.

RESULTS

TrueNAS Unified Storage provided B2+ with a solution that met their storage requirements with a stable, manageable operating system. The system has become integral to their internal networking structure and day-to-day operations. From serving inter-office documents to Quicktime files, the system handles all the data B2+ uses on a daily basis. As they continue to expand operations to national and international audiences, TrueNAS will easily scale to sustain their operations.

“Ultimately, our TrueNAS system has been much more stable than our prior solution, so that makes me feel confident that our data is secure. It’s also much more scalable, so expanding storage isn’t such a headache anymore.”

- Reid Ransom

ABOUT IXSYSTEMS

By leveraging decades of expertise in hardware design, its contributions to many Open Source software communities, and corporate stewardship of leading Open Source projects (FreeNAS and TrueOS), iXsystems has become an industry leader in building innovative storage solutions and superior enterprise servers for a global marketplace that relies on open technology.

Thousands of companies, universities, and government organizations have come to rely on iXsystems’ storage, servers, and consultative approach to doing business. Headquartered in the heart of Silicon Valley since its founding in 1996, the dedication to white-glove customer service, industry-leading support, and transparent technological contributions has never wavered and continues to help lay the foundation for a new era powered by open technology.

