



The Case to Modernize Storage in Media and Entertainment



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Introduction

Today's media and entertainment (M&E) market is experiencing seismic shifts. The market is no longer comprised of just traditional broadcasters. Other organizations who have access to viewers have, and continue to jump into the fray. The way content is consumed is continuing to evolve, and it is being consumed voraciously across many different platforms including smart TVs, mobile phones, tablets, laptops – you name it – if a device has a screen, people will figure out a way to display video on it. With the ultimate goal of attracting greater numbers of viewers, M&E enterprises create or acquire more and more content from various sources. To stay competitive and thrive in this new world of modernization, these enterprises will have to be innovative, cost efficient, and agile in the way that they produce, store and manage assets that are growing in scale and quality, and distribute to attract viewers with the ultimate goal of creating greater potential revenue. Motivated by these market drivers, organizations are forced to take a critical look at many aspects of their businesses, processes, workflows, infrastructure (legacy and new) and chose modern technologies that can deliver greater cost and operational efficiencies to help meet critical business needs.

Traditional Storage in Media and Entertainment

Historically, media and entertainment storage and archives have relied upon traditional interfaces, file structures and hierarchical storage management software (also known as middleware) in order to save on exorbitant costs of production storage. These traditional storage solutions tend to be cumbersome, complex, proprietary in nature, and expensive - not only in purchase, but also expensive in perpetuity, due to their licensing models based on the total amount of storage that they manage. These software packages further leave content creators and content owners in a sticky situation when it comes to forecasting and budgeting for ever-growing content that is being created and stored. All this compounds the need for a modern storage solution to address the numerous challenges posed by these outdated storage models. Now, with the advent of modern storage technologies, traditional storage models are in question, especially for long-term storage and archive. This begs the question: “does middleware have a future in the management and preservation of content in M&E environments?”

A Modern Approach to Storage

Technology advancements have provided a modern alternative to outdated middleware-based systems. A modern storage solution incorporates several key attributes including: ongoing value, control, openness and efficiency.

Control



BlackPearl grants users the ultimate control over their content and its security. On-premise, off-premise, and cloud capabilities give users command over the location and number of copies. BlackPearl makes it easy to access and recover your data independent of hardware and software platforms, providing greater business continuity. Its flexible interfaces allow user to choose tier(s) of storage based on business needs, providing adaptability to change storage protocols as workflow requirements change and technology evolves.

Openness



BlackPearl's open standard code eliminates constraints of proprietary formats. Its customizable architecture allows users to create their own clients, or choose from any of the fully integrated leading asset managers in the industry. With fully automated, semi-automated, and/or manual operations, BlackPearl can be deployed into unique environments. BlackPearl is part of a global infrastructure and meets the needs of the enterprise; from private to public cloud and all future developments.

Efficiency



BlackPearl is a single, centralized gateway that is easy to manage and support, facilitating lean operations. It streamlines and simplifies the workflow, eliminating traditional, unnecessary third party software. Configurable data policies and bucket management decrease restore time and deliver greater efficiency. Highly expandable and upgradable, BlackPearl's modular architecture allows users to seamlessly scale to meet growth needs.

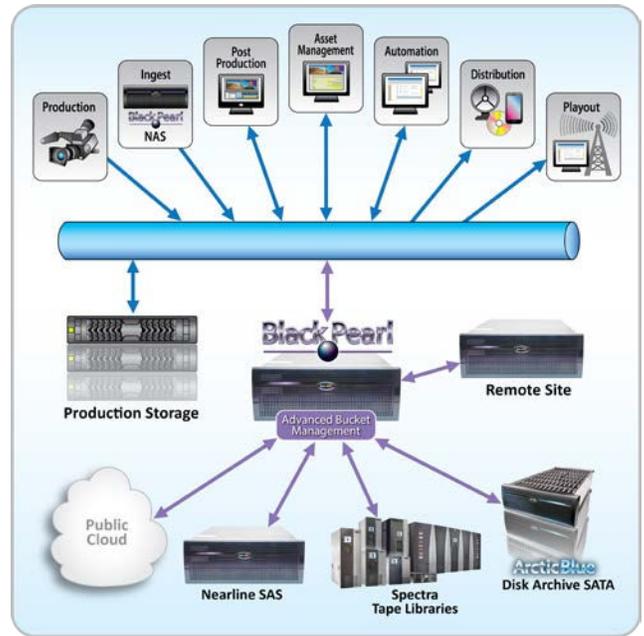
Ongoing Value



An economical content storage solution, BlackPearl creates ongoing value by providing the lowest Total Cost of Ownership (TCO), greater cost forecasting and staging abilities, and a TranScale architecture for growth. To protect both initial and ongoing investments, it also takes into consideration areas of value such as complexities associated with migration, cost of multi-decade retrieval, as well as evolving alongside with changing business needs.

Modern Storage for Media and Entertainment

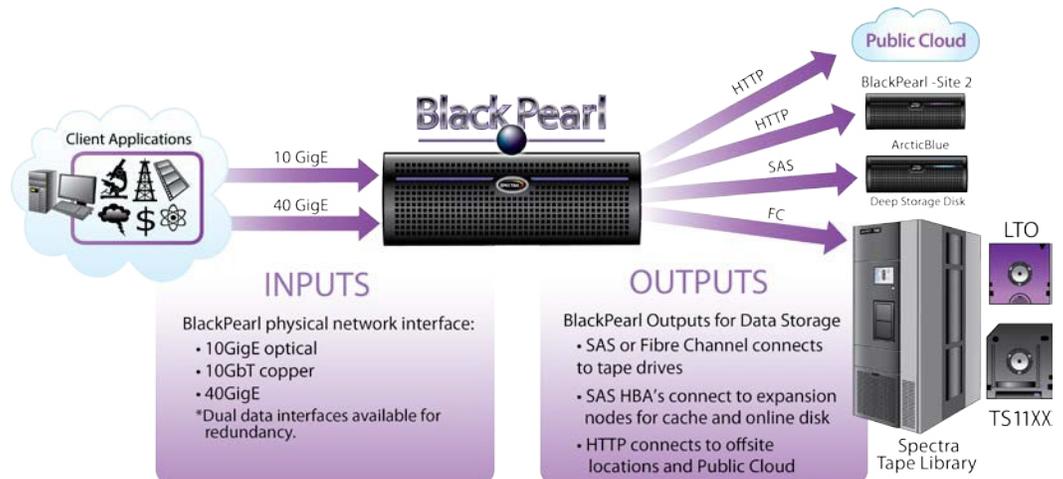
Spectra Logic designed the BlackPearl® Converged Storage System to store and intelligently manage assets – while eliminating the need for 3rd party applications (HSM's). Based on flexible, yet extensible retention policies, BlackPearl stores content to scalable tiers of storage including: disk, tape (LTFs open standard) and even public cloud – providing the flexibility to adapt to enterprises' business needs. This allows users to make sound decisions based on speed of access, efficient workflows, and overall costs – all while meeting business objectives. Agile businesses keep workflows open and flexible, and as needs evolve over time, the migration of content from one storage technology to another will arise which is one of the basic and native tenants of the modern BlackPearl content storage solution.



BlackPearl can automatically replicate assets to other BlackPearl units based on user defined policies. Assets can be replicated to geographically distributed locations, a common feature included in disaster recovery plans. BlackPearl also has the capability to centralize repositories, consolidating assets from multiple locations. It also can be used to simply share content among business units. BlackPearl, as a single portal to multiple storage mediums, ensures seamless and fast concurrent access to assets, which simplifies workflows, and reduces network congestions. For environments where digital tape is used as one of storage targets, LTFs is used to ensure an open medium that can be accessed by any standard LTFs enabled tape drive anytime in the future, giving back end-user control over their own assets. In addition, having files coupled with system-level metadata as extended attributes of the files (constituted as objects) ensure content mobility from one application to another with minimal complexity and effort.

Directly integrated with media asset management applications, this modern storage platform (BlackPearl) eliminates the need for traditional middleware, its associated complexities, and much disdained costly licensing model. With BlackPearl, budgeting and forecasting year-over-year becomes predictable and storage can seamlessly and cost-effectively scale to

accommodate ever-growing content at just the cost of storage, no longer requiring traditional middleware licensing fees. This streamlined approach creates an application-agnostic workflow, and provides a multi-tenant platform to manage, and share assets among any number of applications, very common in an M&E environment.



Taking the Leap - Migration

The truth is, while migrating from a legacy middleware platform seems like a daunting task, the mid- to long-term benefit is well worth some of the short-term challenges; the migration process can be managed to remove much of cost, complexities and traditional headaches.

Conclusion

The challenges posed by the competitive and fast changing M&E market is driving the need for an innovative culture to drive greater efficiencies and ROIs. Enterprises are best served to take advantage of advanced technologies that will modernize their overall infrastructure. The storage infrastructure is a central piece of such areas and outdated middleware-based storage platforms can no longer be overlooked with today's market realities. Storage platforms must be modernized in order to maintain an edge on competition, or at least keep pace with the market.

About Spectra Logic

Spectra Logic develops data storage solutions that solve the problem of short- and long- term digital preservation for business and technology professionals dealing with exponential data growth.

Dedicated solely to storage innovation for nearly 40 years, Spectra Logic's uncompromising product and customer focus is proven by the adoption of its solutions by industry leaders in multiple vertical markets globally.

Spectra enables affordable, multi-decade data storage and access by creating new methods of managing information in all forms of storage—including archive, backup, cold storage, private cloud and public cloud. To learn more, visit www.SpectraLogic.com.