

Discovery Communications Success Story



The Challenge

Discovery Communications is the world's number one nonfiction media company reaching more than 1.5 billion cumulative subscribers in over 170 countries. Discovery empowers people to explore their world and satisfy their curiosity through 100-plus worldwide networks, led by Discovery Channel, TLC and Animal Planet.

Based in London, Discovery Communications' Language Operations Group is responsible for managing the translation of content for the European market. The group provides source and reference assets to outside contractors in 14 dubbed languages and nine subtitled languages. In addition to being responsible for transmission, the team oversees the entire language version workflow. This process helps the company fully monetize its digital assets.

The challenge for the Language Operations Group was creating a digital archive environment for the long term preservation of all language content. This includes original source elements, as well as the translated audio and subtitle files that are rapidly growing to well over a million assets. Given the potential for content reuse and repurposing, the Language Operations Group has plans to retain their assets for at least 10 years.

INDUSTRY

Broadcast

APPLICATION:

Archiving of foreign language audio tracks, subtitle files and related content

SOLUTION:

QStar HSM software
DISC 7000 Blu-ray Library

The Solution

Discovery has a demanding set of archive requirements for its language assets. The archive is scheduled to grow to more than a million small files that will require quick recall over an indefinite period of time. This content is accessed and managed using several different applications, so the archive interface must be as application independent as possible to reduce integration and maintenance. The physical storage media must also meet the random access performance requirement, and deliver a long and secure data life.

After considering magnetic disk, tape and optical archive possibilities, Discovery selected the QStar HSM archive management software for Windows and a DISC 7000 Blu-ray optical library with a system capacity of up to 34TB. The combined solution proved to be a match for the required management functionality and physical storage attributes. The QStar HSM software presents the DISC library as a standard file system, eliminating the need for costly and complex custom integration. The choice of Blu-ray optical media makes data longevity with minimum ongoing media maintenance possible. In addition, the HSM disk cache architecture leverages the quick random access of the Blu-ray media, meeting the retrieval performance expectations of the archive users.



QStar Success Story

Discovery Communications

Content is written directly to the archive or is migrated automatically from selected servers after it exceeds a predefined age. With the archive in place, users search for language effect files associated with specific programs through the internally developed MediaNET application. MediaNET allows users to select the appropriate mix minus audio and video reference files and add them to a shopping cart. Once an order is placed, all the requested files are transparently retrieved through the HSM interface and Blu-ray media. The requests are sorted and users are sent an email informing them when their content has been delivered. Response times are dependent on request size and system traffic, but most users receive their content within a few hours.

The requested language files are then sent electronically to external agencies to produce translated audio files in a WAV format and subtitle files in a proprietary PAC binary format. These new files are delivered electronically to Discovery and written back into the QStar archive using a directory structure organized by language. After the first year of operation, approximately 250,000 files have been archived for a total capacity of 7.5TB. Growth for the archive is expected to continue at the same rate for the next several years.

“It was essential to integrate the archive with several applications including MediaNET” explained Darren Breeze, Director of Broadcast Technology at Discovery Communications. “QStar’s standard file system interface makes application integration simpler as it saves us time and effort, and provides us with the flexibility to make changes as the archive evolves in the future.”

Providing Better Service with MediaNET



By implementing MediaNET, Discovery’s Language Operations Group has been innovative in their approach to meet the demands of content management. MediaNET is a sophisticated media management portal accessed by operations employees across Europe. It allows users to search, identify and manage media content including language effects stored in the QStar archive and DISC library.

MediaNET provides a simple way to locate and manage media assets, improving operational efficiency. The application queues up content requests to the QStar archive by performing a background access task with an automated delivery process. The MediaNET/QStar combination meets the service level requirements of system users and enables greater content repurposing options over years of operation. An efficient, well managed language archive allows content to be fully monetized throughout its life and delivered to TV, web, video on demand, and mobile device services.

“Because we must adhere to a strict schedule to meet delivery deadlines of translated audio and subtitle files, it’s crucial that the language archive be reliable,” said Darren Breeze, Director of Broadcast Technology at Discovery Communications. “Our experience with the QStar HSM software has been positive.”

Planning the Future

The QStar HSM software and DISC Blu-ray library both play a strategic role in the overall delivery of multilingual content across Discovery Communications’ networks. QStar provides a simple, cost effective, and reliable archive for the management of Discovery’s language assets, with the flexibility to adapt to changing needs. Given the success of the current environment, the archive may be extended to include the storage of transmission play list and as run files, which require long term preservation for legal purposes. To accommodate the future need for additional archive capacity, both QStar and DISC are designed to provide incremental archive growth through non-disruption software and storage expansion.

[Discovery Communications Corporate Website](http://www.discoverycommunications.com) – www.discoverycommunications.com



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