



Making the Move: How REELZCHANNEL Delivers More with Less

Expand operations. Improve efficiencies. Reduce costs. Faced with tough business decisions, REELZCHANNEL launched a broad-based initiative to streamline operations and manage costs. Attracted by state incentives and lower labor costs, they moved from Los Angeles to a new facility in New Mexico, where they carefully orchestrated a complete rebuild of their digital library. For asset management, they selected Apple Final Cut Server. To manage the underlying digital archive, they turned to Atempo.

About REELZCHANNEL

REELZCHANNEL—TV About Movies® is the only multiplatform network devoted to delivering entertaining and informative programming that is all about movies, including the celebrities, fashion, music and stories behind the stories. REELZCHANNEL is currently available to over 50 million cable and satellite subscribers in the U.S., attracts approximately one million monthly unique visitors to www.reelzchannel.com and delivers clips to movie fans through iPhone and iPad apps.

Key Solution Requirements

- **Integration with Final Cut Server.** So editors and producers can access the archive directly and restore assets on demand.
- **Scalable architecture.** For rapid storage growth, especially for HD content.
- **Open file formats.** So content is not locked into a proprietary solution.
- **Single vendor** that supports the complete data management workflow—archive, backup and restore.

The Challenge: Providing Direct, Easy Access to their Digital Library

As a producer of daily original programming, REELZCHANNEL's staff is continuously generating, editing and sharing digital content. Both completed programs and raw footage reenter production workflows as content is adapted for various delivery channels and reused in new programming.

Their vast digital library was hosted on a proprietary asset management/archive system that had become a bottleneck that lengthened production cycles. The system was complex, requiring a team of fifteen to manage ingest, encoding, digitization, searching, and retrieval. It was difficult to use, so end users couldn't search for and retrieve files themselves.

Search and retrieval times were excessive—up to 24 hours from the time a request was submitted to when the asset was delivered to the end user. With a planned move to HD, they knew performance would degrade further due to the larger file sizes. Finally, the asset management system used a proprietary format for archiving, which locked them into that vendor's offering and its current and future limitations.

Story at a Glance

Challenges

- Scaling operations and managing costs with a digital library that was complex, inflexible and created bottlenecks.

Solution

- Atempo Digital Archive preserves vital digital assets, including raw footage and completed programs.
- Atempo Time Navigator protects ongoing projects and the asset management infrastructure.

Results

- More than twice the digital content is managed with 1/3 of the staff.
- Archive retrieval times are reduced from hours to minutes.
- Daily production increased from 4-6 to 8-10 hours of content, due to more efficient workflows and content reuse.

"Our digital library is absolutely the most critical asset the company owns. Ensuring our assets are protected and accessible is vital to our continued success. If we do an interview with Brad Pitt, we make sure that footage is available for distribution and reuse in new projects."

-Roger Eman, CTO, SVP Broadcast Operations and Technology, REELZCHANNEL

The Solution: Atempo Digital Archive + Final Cut Server

The REELZCHANNEL relocation plan included a complete overhaul of their digital library. For asset management, they selected Final Cut Server for its ease of use and affordability. After evaluating several archive alternatives, they selected Atempo Digital Archive for these capabilities:

Final Cut Server integration. A plug-in available with Atempo Digital Archive allows editors and producers to archive and retrieve assets and projects directly through the Final Cut Server interface, without requiring assistance from the digital library staff.

Scalability. Atempo Digital Archive offers the scalable performance needed for their expanding archive, which is now approximately 400 TB and expected to double again after moving to HD.

Policy-based multi-tier storage. Atempo Digital Archive orchestrates migration between primary storage, and near line and deep archives. Files are archived to disk and to two sets of tape, with one tape sent off site for disaster recovery purposes. Over time, content is automatically aged off of the near line, with subsequent retrievals automatically delivered from tape.

Flexible archive access. With Atempo Digital Archive, assets can also be accessed outside of the Final Cut Server interface, ensuring content is always accessible. If administrators encounter an issue with Final Cut Server, they can search and retrieve files through the Atempo interfaces.

Open standards. Atempo Digital Archive writes tape files in the open .TAR format, allowing files to be restored outside of the archive or asset management interfaces. This insures that their most valuable asset—their digital library—is not tied to a proprietary product.

Complete data management. In tandem with their archive activities, REELZCHANNEL uses Atempo Time Navigator for nightly backup of key storage platforms, including the Final Cut Server catalog and proxies.

Atempo also helped them migrate content from their legacy asset management system to the new digital library.

“The success of just about any large-scale IT project hinges on the migration process, and how quickly and efficiently you can manage that transition while supporting ongoing operations,” explained Roger Eman, CTO, SVP Broadcast Operations and Technology at REELZCHANNEL. “With Atempo’s flexibility and open standards, we were able to efficiently migrate from our old system, with minimal disruption to our ongoing workflows.”

Infrastructure Snapshot

Primary storage: Apple Xsan

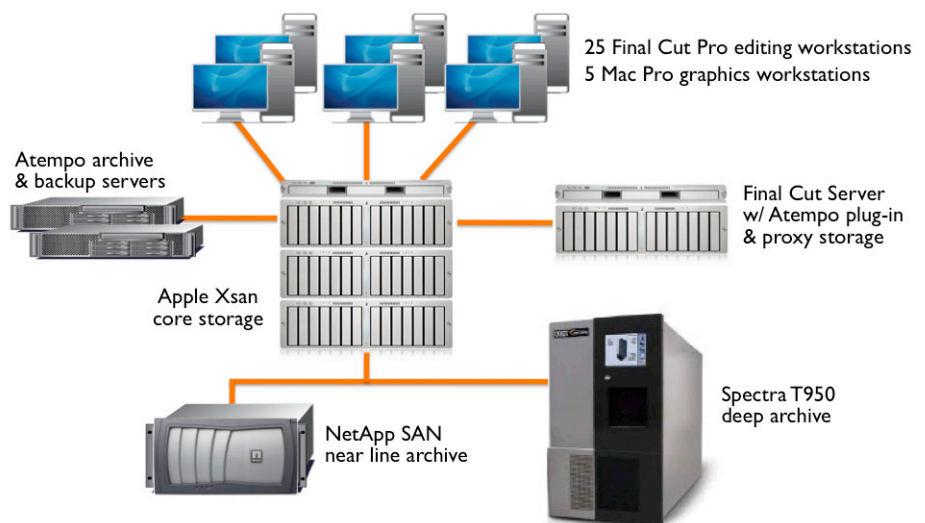
Near line storage: NetApp SAN

Deep archive: Spectra T950 tape library

Total archived content: 400 TB +

Software: Apple Final Cut Server,
Apple Final Cut Pro

End users supported: 30



Atempo Digital Archive manages the digital library's archived content on disk-based and tape-based storage. Tape is also used to back up the Final Cut Server catalog and proxies.

The Result: More Content, Lower Operating Expenses

By replacing their existing proprietary asset management/archive system with Atempo Digital Archive, REELZCHANNEL reports these benefits:

Reduced digital library staffing. With Atempo Digital Archive and Final Cut Server, editors and producers can search and retrieve content without staff assistance. Where the digital library demanded a support staff of 15, fewer than five staff members are now required.

Instantaneous content access. Where once users waited up to 24 hours for a file to be retrieved by library staff, self-service retrievals are instantaneous if pulled from disk-based near line archive, and mere minutes when pulled from the tape-based deep archive.

More original productions per week. With the new digital library in place, editors typically restore 60 or more files per day—far more than previously possible. By restoring archived content, such as celebrity interviews, to use in new productions, REELZCHANNEL was able to expand their programming from 4-6 hours to 8-10 hours per week.

Ready for HD. When the company moves forward with its plans to deliver HD content later in 2010, it will be prepared for the explosive growth this format entails—efficiently and cost effectively.

Prepared for disaster recovery. Because their previous solution used proprietary formats, the offsite backup tapes did not adequately protect their digital library from disasters. With Atempo, there's no need to duplicate the entire asset management environment offsite for disaster recovery. In an emergency, files can be read from tape using standard utilities.



Editors use Final Cut Server to archive, search and retrieve content from the digital library's archive. Librarians also use Atempo interfaces to administer the digital library.

Confirming production consistency.

In one incident, faster archive access helped confirm production consistency. An executive approached the production manager with a concern about how a recent show had been produced. With Atempo Digital Archive, the production manager was able to download several shows from the prior six months, so they could compare them with the recent release—all within five minutes. "In the past, simply locating and downloading the files we needed to review could have taken several meetings and an entire week," Eman revealed. "Now, with Atempo Digital Archive we're able to get these questions answered in minutes."

"We realized an immediate return on our Atempo investment. With self-service access and more streamlined administration, we went from a team of fifteen to less than a handful. We would not have been able to realize our new organizational model without the production efficiencies gained through the Atempo and Final Cut Server solution."

-Roger Eman, CTO, SVP Broadcast Operations and Technology, REELZCHANNEL

Atempo

About Atempo

Atempo enables organizations to preserve and protect digital information simply and effectively, across any infrastructure, on any platform, over long periods of time. Atempo's comprehensive archiving solutions deliver policy-based and workflow-driven management of rich media files, e-mail and other high-value digital assets to maximize the efficiency and performance of storage systems and reduce long-term storage costs. Atempo serves thousands of customers around the world through a sales and support network of over 200 resellers and partners.

Learn more at www.atempo.com