



CBS Digital Protects and Restores High-Value Visual Effects with Atempo Time Navigator™



Problem

CBS Digital artists create visual effects and computer-generated imagery for movies and television, with high-value files reaching up to 500 GB in size. Having experienced a near-disaster where critical data was almost lost, they recognized the immediate need for a sophisticated data protection solution with powerful restoration capabilities.

Goal

CBS Digital sought a reliable enterprise-class data protection solution to manage data across all levels in its complex storage environment. In addition to its critical backup needs, the studio required the ability to quickly and efficiently restore large-size files from archives and other storage tiers.

Results

Using Time Navigator, CBS digital is able to:

- Simplify data protection and management tasks for IT personnel with its reliability and intuitive nature
- Ensure high-value visual effects and CGI data is securely backed up and can be accessed at any time
- Restore archived files faster than ever, giving artists quick access to critical data

“Our artists not only create visual effects that require secure backup policies, but they also constantly leverage older digital frames that need to be recovered from our archives in an efficient and timely manner, Time Navigator gives us the best of both worlds.”

John Small
Systems Engineer
CBS Digital

www.atempo.com

Organization

CBS Digital is the in-house visual effects and post-production division of CBS Corporation. Founded in the early 1990's, the studio is responsible for creating visual effects for a variety of hit television shows and movies, including Pushing Daisies, Numb3rs, Ugly Betty, and others. CBS Digital artists also work on other visual effects projects, including the complete remastering of Star Trek: The Original Series.

The Challenge

CBS Digital artists create visual effects and computer-generated imagery (CGI) across the entertainment industry, with the majority of their projects involving television shows and movies. By nature of its production cycle, this type of programming requires the studio to complete data-heavy projects on short deadlines. This requires all digital assets to be properly protected and archived data to be easily accessible.

After experiencing a near-disaster when the studio's NAS dropped offline during the editing stage of a TV movie, CBS Digital recognized the immediate need for a sophisticated data protection solution that the company could rely on for quick and efficient retrieval of archived effects and frames.

The Solution

Faced with this business-critical task, CBS Digital turned to Atempo to manage over 50 TB of data in the studio's complex storage environment. CBS Digital selected Time Navigator based on the software's strong backup capabilities as well as its powerful Time Navigation feature that gives administrators the ability to rapidly and efficiently restore files saved at any point in time from any storage tier. This file restoration element is particularly critical to CBS Digital, where data-intensive CGI frames must be located and retrieved from the archives on a regular basis.

In addition, Time Navigator's cross-platform capabilities were a key selling point to CBS Digital, where large blocks of CGI data are moved across multiple Mac, Linux and Windows servers and operating systems on a daily basis.

Characteristics of CBS Digital's Environment:

- 9 Apple Xserves
- 2 Sledgehammer NAS linux-based
- 5 Autodesk Stone File Systems
- 1 Xserve RAID
- Workstations running Irix, Windows, Mac and Linux
- 50 Terabytes of data in a complex storage environment

Results

Since its implementation, Atempo Time Navigator has made the job easier for both the IT department as well as for visual effects artists. The software's intuitive nature allows administrators to easily manage data throughout its lifecycle, and its rapid restoration capability lets artists have the CGI frames they require faster than ever.

“We use Time Navigator all the time, so the software's reliability is essential,” said Small. *“It has proven to be a very efficient and vital tool in our day-to-day operations. It has never missed a beat and has made my job a breeze.”*

Moreover, Time Navigator has played a direct and significant role in solving major problems and saving the studio valuable time and expenses. A few months after installation, the technical backup power shorted and CBS Digital's NAS was shut down. However, because all the data was protected with Time Navigator, administrators quickly moved all time-sensitive projects to a newly-purchased server, using that as a lifeboat. No data was lost, and CBS Digital artists were able to continue working and complete their projects on time.