

Case Study: Bayerischer Rundfunk

About Bayerischer Rundfunk

Based in Munich, Bayerischer Rundfunk (BR) is the public broadcasting company for Bavaria, and one of the nine radio/television networks that make up ARD, the German public broadcasting consortium. BR comprises five conventional radio channels, one additional digital audio broadcasting channel, and two 24-hour television channels. It also owns shares of ARD programming and networks, including satellite networks. BR is known for its fine documentary programming and in particular for its coverage of Munich's world-renowned Oktoberfest.

With planning started in 2002, BR became the first broadcaster in Germany to include implementation of digital archiving into its shift of operations and production to a digital format. .

"In shopping for a solution to our content storage management needs, our main consideration was to find the vendor who best knew the needs specific to a broadcast environment. We evaluated other systems, but Front Porch Digital had the most experience and most readily understood our issues."

*- Wolfgang Englmaier,
BR project engineer*



The Challenge

BR was changing its operations and production environment from analog to digital, which naturally required moving from tape to digital archiving in order to take full advantage of the improved efficiency afforded by digitization. Implementation of the large digital deep storage archive became the cornerstone of BR's other digital systems, including transmission servers, production systems, automation, and media asset management.

Once BR moved its storage system beyond reliance on videotape, the company needed flexible access to content on a data-tape archive suited to its storage needs. To this end, BR engineers and management sought a content storage management solution provided by a vendor with a deep knowledge of the broadcast world. The product had to give BR the ability to manage the archive in the way it wanted and had to interface with the other new systems, in particular the Harris automation system.

The Solution

Following the tender process, BR chose Front Porch Digital to provide its content storage management system. The Front Porch Digital DIVArchive system was integrated with BR's Omneon Spectrum media servers and Harris automation, as well as the new workflows being introduced by the company. At BR, DIVArchive is attached to two StorageTek 9310 datatape libraries. Producers access content using Blue Order MediaArchive, a media asset-management system, and check it on a low-resolution (MPEG1 1:5) copy. If the producer wants original quality material, that content can be delivered to the target system automatically via a material order. Most of the material movements are file-based (ftp), and no datatapes are moved.

The system is fully operational around the clock, with engineers working from the master control room. Automated systems monitor output and content, and data are systematically backed up for rapid service restoration. With a central pool of digital assets, programming can be created and scheduled directly from the desktop.

The near-line storage capacity of the archive system is currently 400 TB. Normally, no archive contents will be deleted or externalized. For housekeeping functions Front Porch Digital's DIVArchive repack function is used to reduce fragmentation and maximize tape usage efficiency. The tape capacity will be expanded step by step through adding more tapes with higher density.

In the BR implementation, a D280 StorageTek cache manages different read/write speeds during the archive object movements. Archive and restore requests can be initiated manually via the DIVArchive GUI, independently of direct requests from the asset management application. Front Porch Digital was responsible for the installation and commissioning of equipment, and the training of BR personnel.

"The innovative Front Porch Digital team has been very receptive to our requests and has developed a close professional relationship with our staff since we met them at the 2001 NAB convention. We believe that Front Porch Digital is the must-see company for implementing content storage management solutions."

*Herbert Gerstmayr,
BR project engineer*

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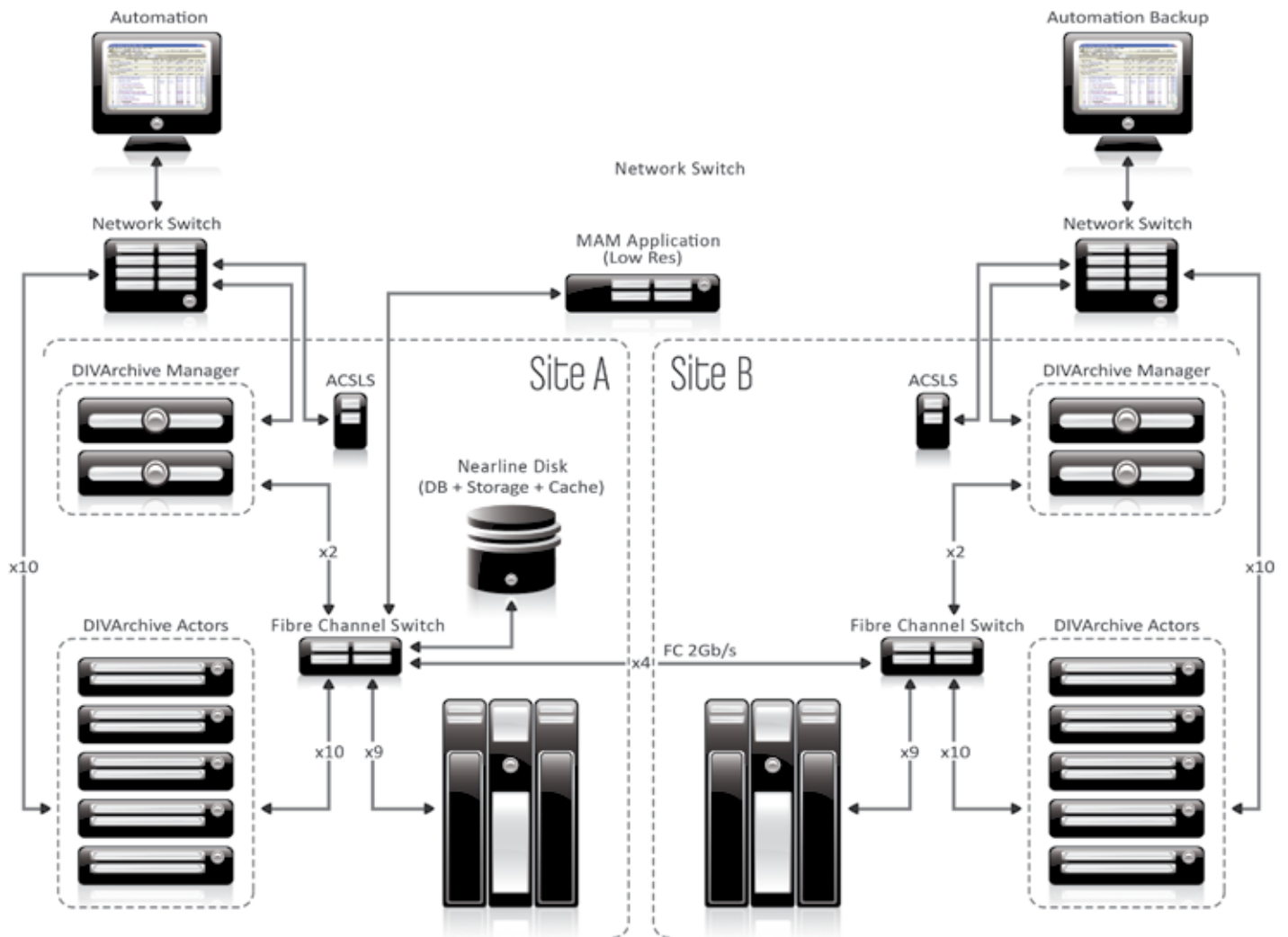
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Future Evolution

Another critical benefit of DIVArchive system is that it treats media as objects to which operators can append extra essence including audio tracks or HD-material. Thus, assets can grow over time without redigitizing. BR is currently archiving about 15 hours per day of content but anticipates that by the end of the year that number will increase to 40 hours per day.

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