HP   NetServers   Customer Solutions

customer story

Creative Artists Agency Casts HP and Microsoft for High-end Multimedia Network

CAA

"What You Know" Matters. The corner of Wilshire and Santa Monica Boulevards in Beverly Hills is one of the hottest spots around, not only for real estate, but talent and technology as well. From this high profile intersection, Creative Artists Agency—one of the "Big 3"—helps navigate the careers of some of Hollywood's brightest stars, hippest musicians and most gifted directors and writers, as well as other artistic types. HP and Microsoft power the behind-the-scenes technology engine helping drive those agent-artist relationships.

"Our greatest asset is information," explained Michael Keithley, CIO of CAA. "Our ability to get it quickly and easily into the right hands, and to do it in novel ways, is what separates us from our competitors. The investments we make in leading-edge technology allow us to accomplish that task better than the competition."

CAA's Intranet: A Visual Advantage. One of CAA's key strategic business weapons is the use of its intranet to deliver streaming media. Called Beverly Hills TV, or BHTV, CAA's in-house programming provides multicasts in real time over the agency's network, allowing employees to tune into selected "channels." BHTV is accessible to every CAA employee thanks to the Microsoft Windows Media™ Services feature in Windows® 2000, which runs on an HP NetServer LPr system, with LXr 8000 and 8500 servers acting as databases that provide the rich digital content.

PROFILE

Company Information:
- Literary and talent agency
- Headquarters: Beverly Hills, CA
- Approximately 500 employees

Business Focus:
- Talent representation and contract negotiation

"The HP-Microsoft combination gives us a very robust platform to deliver streaming media to our end users. Windows 2000 has the right stuff to allow us to do that, and HP is a trustworthy, reliable company with great products and technical support."

Michael Keithley, CIO, Creative Artists Agency

customer story

CAA uses streaming media as both a push and pull medium. Talent agents can view channels that highlight current events and information CAA is promoting, such as audio and video clips of promising musicians and bands. Agents can also request and choose from a panoply of digital content, including noteworthy scenes from their clients' TV shows or films, movie trailers and collections of actor-specific clips. Digital media can also be incorporated into e-mail, making it much more compelling than text-based information.

"Streaming media allows us to better manage our client relationships and to be 'in-the-know' about who and what is hot and up-and-coming," said Keithley. "It's all about convenience and timeliness. Now we have one place where our entire staff can access updated information quickly and in real time."

CAA is also using the beta version of Windows 2000 on the HP NetServer LPr and LXr 8000 as IIS servers for its intranet content and for file and print.

With the official release of Windows 2000, the agency plans to transfer all its applications to the new platform, beginning with IIS, Exchange for e-mail and messaging, SQL Server for its databases and its proprietary extranet applications.

Utilizing Bleeding-Edge Technology. CAA delivers its robust, business-critical content via approximately 45 HP 4- and 8-way NetServer LPr and LXr 8000 and 8500 systems. An additional 25 HP NetServers are used as e-mail, fax, and file and print servers.

HP NetServer LPr systems are ideal for running Windows 2000, according to Keithley. "They're perfect for real-time encoding of media because they're very compact servers that can be configured with fast processors. They can also be easily linked together to create 'encoding farms' without using much space."

For disk I/O-sensitive activities, such as streaming movies with Windows Media Services, and for its large SQL Server databases and Exchange messaging system, CAA relies on high-capacity HP NetServer LXr 8000 and 8500 systems with Fibre Channel and Rack Storage/12FC disk arrays.

HP OmniBack II assists with backup and retrieval of the stored digital media. When used in conjunction with HP's SureStore E SAN Manager LM on a Fibre Channel SAN, CAA can achieve incredible throughput rates.

HP OpenView Network Node Manager handles overall network management and event notification, while HP OpenView ManageX helps CAA more proactively control and manage its servers than before. "HP OpenView Express allows us to be very proactive in controlling our Windows 2000 application and network," said Keithley. Hardware/software

"The partnership and the commitment between HP and Microsoft translate into a high level of integration. When you're troubleshooting, or have to tackle advanced issues such as clustering and Fibre Channel, it's critical to have a vendor who has a tight relationship with Microsoft. We know that HP's configurations are supported by Microsoft and vice-versa, and that we can get technical support when we need it. That's really the bottom line."

Michael Keithley, CIO, Creative Artists Agency

inventory and software distribution are facilitated by
HP TopTools and Desktop Administrator.

CAA will implement Windows 2000 Advanced Server
Clustering Service and Network Load Balancing to
improve server reliability and performance.

With a switched 1 GB Ethernet backbone and switched
100 MB Ethernet going out to 1000 client systems,
CAA's high-speed, high-performance network can deliver
rich content to every employee with a computer.

"We're using bleeding-edge technology," said Keithley.
"Our infrastructure is very advanced and demanding
for Intel/Windows NT® and Windows 2000 networks. It's
something you'd expect to find in a UNIX-based platform."

*Michael Keithley
at Paramount
Studios.*

Leveraging Windows 2000 Advanced Capabilities.

Windows 2000 offers CAA numerous improvements over Windows NT® 4.0 that expand and enhance CAA's
intranet capabilities and security, simplify network administration, improve fault tolerance and increase scalability.

CAA plans to expand its Internet/intranet capabilities by establishing a secure, encrypted virtual private network
using IPSec networking technology, which is supported by Windows 2000. "Not only will we avoid costly dedicated
phone lines, but it will bring us a step closer to our goal of enabling our employees to do from home everything
they can do at work," explained Keithley. CAA will also take advantage of Windows 2000 support of FireWire to
speed digital capture from devices such as digital cameras.

Windows 2000 IntelliMirror™ and Active Directory™ technologies will simplify CAA's network administration and
application development. IntelliMirror allows administrators to intelligently manage users' software, settings, and
data through group-level policies, and automatically regenerates a user's complete environment regardless of
location. Active Directory will be a "godsend" according to Keithley. It will help CAA to quickly create and securely
manage its complex user groups and policies, as well as more easily develop custom applications by leveraging
user, group, policy, security and network quality-of-service features across all its applications.

With the more robust clustering offered in Windows 2000, Keithley expects to more closely match the fault
tolerance, uptime and reliability provided by UNIX-based systems. Windows 2000 integrated Cluster Services
deliver higher levels of service and availability than Windows NT 4.0.

The Windows 2000 Datacenter with 32-way symmetric processor support will allow it to scale with CAA's stream-
ing media requirements. "We want to be able to take an application, such as Exchange, and our streaming media
databases, and grow them to extremely large sizes," said Keithley. "With Windows 2000, we are not constrained."

**"All our applications will be centered around and tied into our intranet. Windows 2000 has every-
thing built into it that we need to make that happen. And the robust performance of HP NetServers
will back up those efforts."**

Michael Keithley, CIO, Creative Artists Agency

HEWLETT®
PACKARD

customer story

Reliability: The HP-Microsoft Advantage.
With a system as advanced as CAA's, reliability is the central issue. "The partnership and the commitment between HP and Microsoft translate into a high level of integration," said Keithley. "When you're troubleshooting, or have to tackle advanced issues such as clustering and Fibre Channel, it's critical to have a vendor who has a tight relationship with Microsoft. We know that HP's configurations are supported by Microsoft and vice-versa, and that we can get technical support when we need it. That's really the bottom line."

Keithley also gives HP outstanding marks for the reliability and high uptime of its systems. "HP NetServers are fantastic. I can't think of a time when a hardware failure has caused downtime. HP delivers very solid products."

A fan of HP's NetServer Solution Center in Silicon Valley, Keithley finds it an invaluable resource for learning about new technologies. "Every time I go there, I come away with new ideas about how to utilize leading-edge technologies to our advantage."

Benefits.   CAA has begun to experience significant cost savings. It has eliminated its physical library by digitizing scripts and delivering them to end users via its intranet. Multicasting allows agents to view their clients' TV broadcasts on their computers, thereby eliminating the need for TVs and cable feeds in every office. With streaming media, CAA can securely distribute content via its intranet without needing to download MP3 files, or make tapes and CDs. Productivity increases because information is accessible with a few mouse clicks. CAA has also reduced its backup times and improved backup/restore availability with HP OmniBack II. Overall backup throughput is 20 times faster.

The agency is able to make better use of pricey floor space by optimizing its datacenter with compact, rack-mounted HP NetServers. "We're growing rapidly and continually running out of space, which in this town comes at a premium," explained Keithley.

Keithley firmly believes that multicasting is far more compelling than e-mail and text-based information. And he wants the delivery system–CAA's intranet–to be smart. "All our applications will be centered around and tied into our intranet. The HP-Microsoft combination gives us a very robust platform to deliver services to our end users. Windows 2000 has everything built into it that we need to make that happen. And the robust performance of HP NetServers will back up those efforts."

COMPUTING ENVIRONMENT

Operating Systems:
• Microsoft® Windows® 2000 Advanced Server, Windows NT® 4.0 Server

Application Software:
• Microsoft Exchange Server 5.5, Internet Information Server (IIS) 4.0, Office 2000, Internet Explorer (IE) 5.0, Microsoft SQL Server 7.0
• Proprietary

Hardware:
• HP NetServer LC 3, LPr, LXr 8000 and LXr 8500
• HP Vectras, OmniBooks, LaserJet printers, ScanJet scanners, Digital Senders

Management Software:
• HP OpenView Express (Network Node Manager, ManageX, OmniBack II), Desktop Administrator

Storage Area Network (SAN):
• HP SureStore E: SAN Manager LM, Bridge Fibre Channel (FC), Switches and Hubs, SAN Tape Libraries, Disk Array 12/FC

STAY **IN** TOUCH

www.hp.com/go/netserver

HP NetServers:
Simply Reliable