

# Make the Most of Your Media

"5 Steps to Success with Video Storage Solutions" Guide



## 1. Manage and share your media assets effectively.

Moving from tape-based to file-based media has been one of most significant advancements in today's broadcast and post production industries. Media is increasingly stored in digital form, together with all of the related metadata.

But as every action precipitates a reaction, every advancement precipitates its own particular challenges. The challenges with digitally-stored media are three-fold:

- How to store it conveniently where you can find it again
- How to retrieve it along with all the pertinent or related data
- How to share it with others who want to work on the same, or another project

To meet these challenges, you need a shared storage solution specifically constructed to manage your media, because this is your lifeblood, from which emanate the two most essential elements of your business, creativity and profit.

System and storage vendors typically offer two broad categories of shared storage: 1) relatively small, largely proprietary systems with limitations on scalability and flexibility, and 2) enterprise storage systems designed primarily for IT applications.

The issue with the former is that when time comes to expand your capabilities or adjust your workflow to meet changing business needs, their capabilities may not be great enough or their platform not customizable enough to adapt to new requirements. The issue with the latter is that while these enterprise-level systems may provide virtually unlimited storage capacity, they are not specifically constructed to work within the context of real-time media production.

Avid shared storage is specifically targeted at the unique needs of content creation professionals, providing a solution specifically designed for the media production environment with the expandability and flexibility necessary to help you not only meet today's requirements, but take advantage of a rapidly-changing media landscape and the new business opportunities it fosters.



## 2. Determine the level of flexibility you need and the best way your media management solution can be tailored to your workflow.

So, how much is enough? And how can you make the most of your media by adapting your shared storage solution to the work you need to produce? While the workflow in a broadcast news station may be considerably different from that of a post production house doing everything from film finishing to music video production, they both require an ability to archive, retrieve, share and repurpose media in the easiest, most expeditious manner possible.

Thus, a solution specifically constructed for the media storage environment, but with the range of extensibility and customization necessary to encompass the full range of user environments is the clear option of choice. From there, it is not so much a process of determining what the system will do, but of how it can do it most effectively in your particular environment.

At Avid, we facilitate this by working as a systems consultant at the start of the evaluation and selection process. The objective is to define both the current structure of your workflow as well how anticipated developments would impact its future form. A decision on what storage system is the best fit for your operation is not solely based on either business or technological criteria, but a combination of both. Vendors that understand that are in a significantly better position to ensure what you get matches what you need, both now and in the years to come.


## 3. Assess the level of storage capability you need so you don't pay for what you don't use.

This is of particular concern when contemplating a solution provided by an IT-based enterprise-level developer. Their primary benefit is virtually unlimited storage space and/or a lower \$ per GB pricing structure. But volume alone is not the sole consideration. No matter how much it's been tweaked for digital media, IT storage has been generically conceived with a bias toward small block I/O, and transaction processing type data—both antithetical to the needs of real-time digital media.

So, you don't want to pay for storage capability you will never use, and may, in fact, come with offsetting liabilities. In looking at enterprise-level storage, one such liability is its IT orientation. These storage solutions were crafted for large IT enterprise applications and not specifically for a media production environment. Therefore, interfacing and compatibility on a variety of levels is incomplete and may present an array of challenges going forward.

The most efficacious solution is to work with a vendor that helps determine the type and amount of storage required both now and in the future, then tailor a production-based solution to that requirement. Avid is a strong proponent of working in partnership with a customer and understanding what they need and why before even venturing into any discussion about the implementation of specific pieces of equipment.

Years of experience in both broadcast and post production industries has proven that there are no one-size-fits all solutions. Thus, our product orientation is toward high performance, robust storage systems best tailored to fit your business and technological needs.



#### 4. Factor in the cost of ownership—installation, service, and support.

As with any large, integrated solution that touches all aspects of a facility, installation, service and support are not what happens after the purchase decision has been made. They should be as integral a part of the process as the solution itself. Not only does that provide the help and guidance you need throughout the entire acquisition process, but ensures you will not incur undue follow-on charges.

When you deal with any vendor, it is important to determine their basic approach to installation, service and support. Do they view it as a separate entity, or is it something they see as an integral part of the business development process? Unfortunately, for some, it's more an opportunity to generate incremental revenue than a way to understand customer needs and what informs their choices.

Avid places a priority on building partnerships with its customers. When providing as fundamental a media production tool as shared media storage, the company has a strong stake in what happens after the sale is completed, both in the short and long term. In order to ensure the best possible outcome, it is necessary to get involved from the start, when technical and business needs are first assessed and evaluated. For Avid, installation, service and support are as preventative as they are curative. Investing a relatively modest amount of time and effort at the beginning to get a solution that does what you want is a far more economical proposition than spending a lot more later on to fix what you've got.

#### 5. Validate storage solution reliability and quality.

There is no substitute for testing. It's the only way to effectively ensure the industry standard levels of reliability and quality that should come as part of any solution you buy.

Testing doesn't just mean putting products through their paces. It means putting them through paces that simulate real-world environments. A number of auto manufacturers, for instance, subject their vehicles to 24-hour high-speed exercises complete with road-surface simulations.

Avid testing is structured similarly. The rigor and thoroughness of our testing processes is unsurpassed in the industry because we want to be sure it duplicates what happens under peak activity loads in your facility. We measure not just to product specifications, but real-world workflow applications. Only this level of quality assurance can ensure you get the kind of reliability you've paid for and need.