ERA Editing Work Groups Solutions Brief

Key Features

- Ability to build low density/high-capacity SSD or SAS storage
- Access to 18TB Seagate hard drives
- Seagate connected over a network to the editing workstations
- Spaces Project Workspace Manager control workstations
- Remote users are connected via Tiger Bridge intelligent storage management
- Teradici's Cloud Access Plus software enables remote users access to the editing workstation

Benefits

- Creates virtual workspaces
- Workspaces are isolated from the physical storage
- Users are always connected to their data
- Workspaces can be run from a remote PC, tablet or thin client

Introduction

Video editing is a core element in post-production and one that takes up a great proportion of most facility houses. The number of offline cutting rooms can be increased or lowered according to how many projects are being worked on at any one time. This means post companies have to be flexible in terms of the amount of room they have at their premises and how many edit systems are available.

This underlines that editing, like the other post-production disciplines, is a service. But it is the one that has the greatest potential and flexibility to be offered in that way. This is due to the development of software-based editing technology for computers rather than using dedicated hardware, which meant that a workstation could be set up in an office or any other available room, not just a dedicated suite.

The concept of editing as a service is now being fully realised thanks to further technological advances, not only in edit programs but also storage, networking, connectivity and, ultimately, the cloud. ERA is a leading provider of IT workflow systems for facilities and broadcasters and has over the last five years been offering editing work groups as a service. As a consequence, it has delivered a great deal of flexibility and functionality to some of the UK leading post houses.

Background and development of editing operations

The trend for fully interconnected and networked editing departments is a major move on from the traditional model. Since the earliest days of commercial facilities, the norm was for specialist editors to work on often cumbersome hardware-based video editing systems in purpose-built premises. In the days of video tape, the edit suites were entities unto themselves, with little or no opportunity for sharing a project with another room or editor, other than physically moving the videotape.

The advent of digital media changed things dramatically, particularly with the introduction of hard drives and solid state technology. But editing operations remained largely tied to bricks and mortar premises in areas such as Soho and Fitzrovia. Inside the editing suite, the workstation was also likely to be still tethered to local storage, either within the computer or on an external device attached to it.

The big change came with the advancement of networking technologies. These are now used to connect not only suites within the same building but also with facilities in other parts of a city or even other parts of a country and beyond. This has led to a new model for post-production and editing in particular.

The new set-up for 21st century editing

On-premise editing has not gone away but it has changed dramatically in the way it is done. A modern editing facility - which could be an older-style suite or in someone's office - typically houses an edit workstation (a Mac or a PC running dedicated software) connected to a storage system. The editing
systems within a post company, or being used on a project, are all connected via a network, which allows for material and work in progress to be accessed remotely by any authorised member of the production team.

The post-production chain has been greatly extended because of this. It can now work both backwards to the set so that edits may be shared with the location crew, allowing for changes to be made to the shoot and then re-edited if necessary; and also enabling editors, producers and the director to view and make alterations to an edit from wherever they might be.

ERA work groups editing as a service

ERA has created a set-up for editing, based around its own data centre and the most advanced storage and interfacing technology products available. The core of the system is Seagate data storage. ERA recently became one of only five Seagate Platinum Partners in the UK. This has the benefit of direct contact with Seagate's enterprise division, which enables ERA to build low density/high capacity SSD or SAS storage into clients' systems. ERA's close partnership with Seagate also allows them access to the latest 18TB hard drives, offering up to 1.9PB in just 4U.

Seagate Exos drive tray

Seagate storage is one of two major components of ERA's editing Infrastructure as a Service (IAAS). The other is the range of management and connectivity tools provided by Tiger Technology. The Seagate system is connected over a network to the editing workstations, which are controlled by the Tiger Spaces Project Workspace Manager. This creates virtual workspaces that are isolated from the physical storage, ensuring users are always connected to their data despite the ongoing movement of files.

The Tiger Bridge intelligent storage management system is used to securely connect remote users, working on any project, to the Seagate data store. It is able to provide an effective interface to the cloud, network-attached or direct-attached (NAS/DAS) storage or tape archives. Teradici's Cloud Access Plus software is employed to give remote users access to the editing workstation, which are provided by ERA as part of the full-service experience. Workstations can then be run from a remote PC, tablet or thin client.

A further option is to use ERA's Coeus subscription service to move material on to a Seagate long-term storage system for archiving purposes.

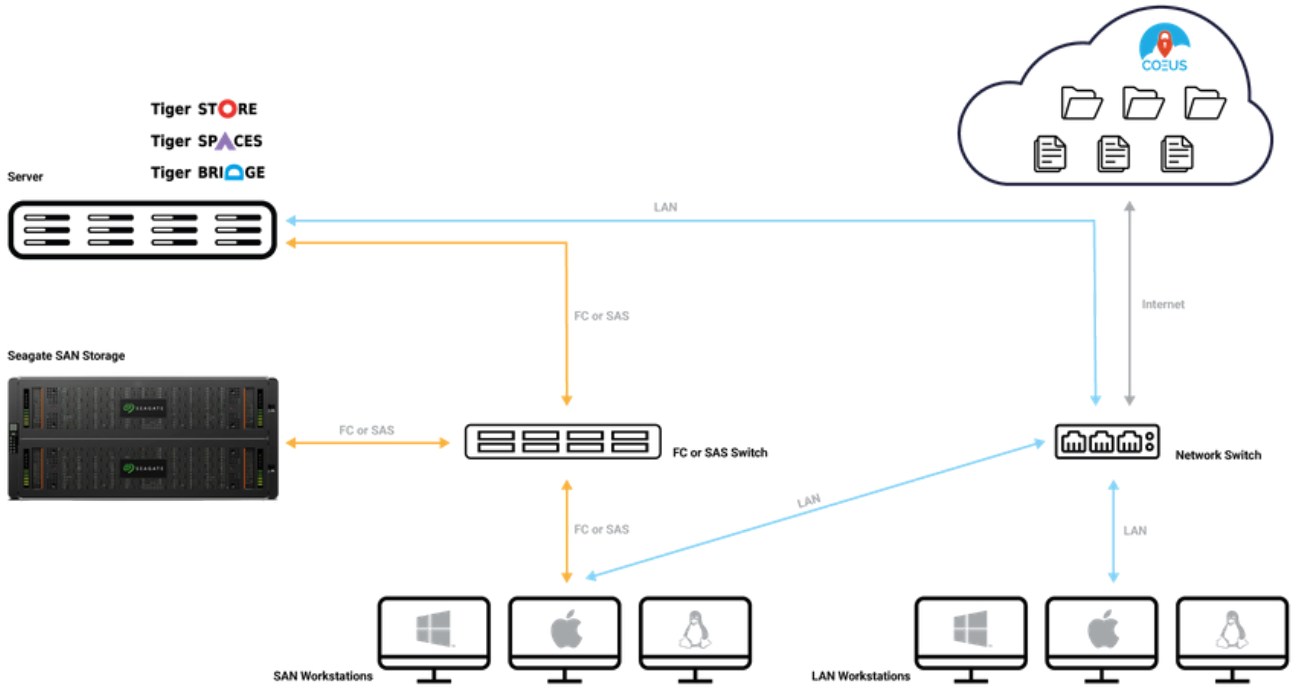

Diagram showing ERA Cloud with Tiger Technology and Seagate

Conclusion

Editing has always been a service but today it is something that can be enhanced and offered by a third-party data and IT specialist such as ERA. This enables the editors and editing facilities to concentrate on creativity and not have to worry about storage and interconnectivity issues. Remote post-production services were already becoming widely accepted in the facilities business, but they have had serious validation during the COVID crisis, demonstrating how effective remote operation can be. Editing as a full service, complete with storage, networking, archiving and support, is no longer just a marketing claim, it is a reality.