

Audio Post-Production House Adopts Global File Services for the Hybrid Workplace

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— Ben Conlon, Chief Tech at Sonic Union

Overview

Sonic Union is a creative audio company with two main studio locations in NYC. They provide recording, sound design, mixing, and original music for the commercial TV, radio, podcast, and Internet markets. Their work includes using specialized hardware and software, as well as manipulating and organizing client-provided materials. Besides the two main locations, the company also has dozens of remote employees in the NYC metropolitan area and beyond.

Challenge: The Pandemic Forces A Technology Change

Previous to March 2020, all work was done on premises. All production files were kept on local workstations and copied daily to a central on-prem NAS server unit that was replicated as a backup in Sonic Union's second location. Both studios functioned as if on the same private and secure LAN, and called to the central server for data storage, element transfer, and many other functions related to data management and archiving. The data was also archived offsite once no longer seen as "hot" using cloud storage and physical drives. As all of the systems and workflows were centered on the physical studios, Sonic Union needed to pivot to support remote workers when the pandemic hit.

The main challenge was to support their team members now working remotely who required consistent and reliable access to the central data storage. Mixers and assistants needed to constantly and securely pass session folders of large size with many smaller internal files or large video files back and forth, and these transfers had to be timely so as not to affect session workflow.

Solution: Wasabi & Morro Data Global File Services Meet the Challenge

Initially, Sonic Union tried to bridge the gap by utilizing a mixture of existing systems, cloud buckets, and VPN/FTP but found it to be inefficient and difficult to manage. Also, any discernible latency in accessing files makes manipulating large audio and video files impractical using a remote desktop through VPN.

CUSTOMER

SONIC★UNION

INDUSTRY

Media & Entertainment

USE CASES

Remote work, Data centralization

CHALLENGES

- Support dispersed workforce, ensure reliable data access

SOLUTION

Morro Data

RESULTS

- Creation of integrated hybrid cloud storage system
- Synchronized work among employees in dispersed locations
- Reduced backup and archive complexity

Sonic Union's MSP, Macktez, introduced Morro Data and Wasabi to the company as a solution. Morro Data was attractive as the CloudNAS solution provided centralized management for Sonic Union's production files and helped them bring 'the server' right to each person's location, virtually. The solution utilized Wasabi cloud object storage to underpin the shared file system. A G80 CacheDrive gateway was deployed at each worker site to keep a local copy of the most active files for fast access and to upload the latest files to the Wasabi cloud for sharing with the other remote workers. The hybrid nature of the solution and automatic fetching functions meant that sessions completed the day before were waiting locally and didn't need to be downloaded by team members to continue working on the project.

File integrity and efficiency were the most critical criteria for Sonic Union. They needed to make sure that client and session data was not only secure and not at risk of corruption, but also stored in a way that made efficient use of the available assets. The company needed staff members to be able to pass media materials with the consistency of a file system, not relying on human communication or memory. For storage efficiency and cost savings, deduplication and compression were required to minimize redundant files and reduce the storage footprint created in the workflow.

Morro Data CloudNAS and Wasabi met all of the above requirements. The idea of a fully-integrated hybrid system offered as-a-service was something new and gave Sonic Union a fully supported platform to work from. Wasabi's storage is among the lowest-priced in the industry on a per-TB basis, and since Wasabi does not charge additional fees for data egress or API requests, Sonic Union could move their files freely in and out of the cloud without incurring additional expense.

Sonic Union were very impressed with the ease of deployment. All of the initial processes of deploying and configuring the system were finished within days. Sending the G80 CacheDrives to individual's homes constituted the bulk of the work.

The central management of storage pools and shares made it incredibly easy to set up secure storage with limited access for Sonic Union's more private clients. Their data can be kept in separate buckets and policy managed to limit which staff members and staff devices can access them.

An 18-Month Review

Sonic Union now has a system that allows for almost-synchronous work among staff across a variety of locations. It enables production staff to work remotely and still be constantly connected to the latest project data. The company has been able to add staff in a number of new locations, even thousands of miles away, that all collaborate cohesively. Now that their master data is automatically stored in Wasabi, the time and energy that used to be spent on backup and archiving has been greatly reduced.

Sonic Union's next steps are to work on fine-tuning their implementation. They are planning to upgrade their main studio from a G80 Pro to a virtualized CacheDrive on a server. This will allow them to better support the live demand of the entire studio as that gradually returns. The company will continue to optimize access for both on and off premises work as their business expands, and Morro Data and Wasabi's solution will be key to that ongoing initiative.

ABOUT WASABI

Wasabi provides simple, predictable and affordable hot cloud storage for businesses all over the world. It enables organizations to store and instantly access an unlimited amount of data at 1/5th the price of the competition with no complex tiers or unpredictable egress fees. Trusted by tens of thousands of customers worldwide, Wasabi has been recognized as one of technology's fastest-growing and most visionary companies. Created by Carbonite co-founders and cloud storage pioneers David Friend and Jeff Flowers, Wasabi is a privately held company based in Boston.

ABOUT MORRO DATA

Morro Data was founded by Paul Tien, who is one of the original visionaries for simple, high capacity, redundant storage for large and small enterprises. A decade ago Tien launched ReadyNAS, which was later acquired by NETGEAR and became the number one selling NAS.

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