

## Wonderland Productions: A Case Study Searching the Rabbit Hole for Shared Storage



Wonderland Productions is a growing production company whose mission is to create dynamic, top quality film and television projects. The company is driven by founder Bill McCullough and his partners, executive producer Dan Klein, and composer and sound designer, John Wiggins. With an unmatched ability to conceive, produce, direct, write, edit, score and finish, the partners generate their own projects as well as create a collaborative home for projects brought to Wonderland.

Wonderland Productions profile:

- Located in the heart of New York City's entertainment district
- Client roster includes HBO, Cinemax, Spike TV and NBC
- Founded in 1998 by four-time Emmy-winning industry veteran, Bill McCullough

Wonderland Productions takes a unique shared approach to providing world-class services by diverse talents. Wonderland's turnkey capabilities include idea conception, production, direction, writing, editing, scoring and film finishing.

### Through the Looking Glass: Identifying the Problem

Wonderland Productions dominated the industry as a turnkey production studio managing all walks of media including sports documentaries and social commentaries for leading media giants in the industry – HBO Studios, NBC Sports and ESPN. However, the Wonderland crew was using TranSoft, a storage system that was made obsolete due to the manufacturer (HP) ending its support of the product. Shortly after this, Wonderland found themselves cut off from ongoing support of much needed functions and upgrades. With Wonderland's growth plans, Bill McCullough knew they needed to find a shared storage solution that was firmly planted in the industry.



"We had our parameters set on what we wanted for our next solution," explains Santiago Gutierrez, online editor and engineer at Wonderland Productions. "We were looking for shared storage with built-in RAID-0 and 1 to preserve any data that could be compromised due to drive failure. In addition to the security and reliability aspect, we are booked on multiple projects, so we have several editors working simultaneously on projects. Our ideal solution had the capability to share this data with workstations across platforms, to enhance collaborative workflow."

According to Gutierrez, "Typically, we would not put a storage system into place without a trial period or third-party endorsement, so we so we looked to other studios to determine what alternative solutions were being used. We had looked at quality solutions by Rourke and Studio Network Systems, but the investment was significant." Wonderland received multiple recommendations about a cost-effective newcomer to the playing field – Facilis Technology's TerraBlock.

## Striking the Queen of Hearts: Implementing TerraBlock

The solution was available in a size that fit their needs, so McCullough invested in one 12D model. The Facilis Technology staff came to the Wonderland Productions site to install the unit and connect the Windows NT machine, the legacy Mac OS 9 machines and the OS X systems together using TerraBlock's "Server-Direct" architecture, which employs the best attributes of SAN and NAS creating a high-performance system that is reliable and easy to configure. For the first time, Wonderland was able to read and write seamlessly across platforms.



TerraBlock was implemented in November 2004, six months after Wonderland had begun working on an HBO documentary featured as part of Cinemax's Reel Life series, *Cutting Edge*. "The limitations of the previous storage system had created data bottlenecks that constantly haunted the completion of the project by our deadlines," stated Gutierrez. "As soon as the TerraBlock was installed, we tested its capabilities and were able to speed through the post-production process. Instantly, we were working 5-6 times faster than on any other product we had tested."

Wonderland has three Meridian AVID Suites, a FCP Online room, and a Pro Tools HD Suite; all fully integrated through a TerraBlock shared storage system. This connectivity enables every room to share projects and media, streamlining the work process and maximizing the client's creative time. "Wonderland Productions has accentuated its capabilities and now has the scalability to facilitate the evolution into HD and beyond."