

# Storage Solutions Reaching A Tipping Point?

**Variable block size, large audio regions to multiple tiny cross-fades, speed vs. spindle count, the seek time of the drives; it's a problem isn't it?**

Ask any Head of Audio Post about shared storage solutions for their sound studio facility and in the past you would have got a lot of this, all combined with a fair old bit of chin scratching. I refer you to Harry Enfield and his Mr You Don't Want To Do It Like That.

In the last couple of years or so things have started to move forward and SAN/NAS for audio post has a foothold. Your DAW is now comfortable with network storage, something that hasn't always been the case in the past. However, that foothold is nowhere near as strong as it is in the video world.

Looking at the high-level design of a video post-production system the workstation/client application and the storage/network element would have equal importance. In the audio world that strength of connection between these elements isn't fully there yet for everyone, although it's definitely getting there.

Given the move to tapeless workflow you would have thought a shared storage space for those with multiple sound studios would have been just the ticket? So what's with the sluggish take up and are we going to see that accelerate?

On a recent project for a University we connected their five Pro Tools DAWs via an EVO system from Studio Network Solutions, all supplied by the fine people at HHB. Each workstation connected over a single Ethernet cable, simple iSCSI back to mainframe housed in a 3U chassis (the iSCSI connection was handy as there wasn't a spare PCI slot in the house!). I thought the system was reasonably priced and worked really well. Divide the total cost by the number of seats and the figure for adding shared storage per studio really makes sense given the boost you get to your productivity. Plus you get all your data in one place, ready for collaboration, for any administration task or asset management. Once you get your SFX material on there as well you'd be really



starting to rock.....

There is definitely a tipping point in terms of the number of studios and DAWs you run and the need for a SAN solution. If you are slaving multiple systems together, or simply swapping systems between rooms, the tipping point gets even lower. Add in the need to work at higher sample rates and you just go out and buy one!

We recently spent a bit of time looking at just this scenario; a set-up with multiple DAWs connected in a flexible manner to different studios. Working with audio consultants the Dynamic Drive Pool (DDP) came under consideration and seemed to fit the bill. So an Ethernet SAN system is now included in the design package and, if the installation comes to fruition, will be the central element of this audio studio complex.

So the leaning tower of desktop drives is about to take a tumble.....

**BY ROBIN HOWELL**

[www.wirebroadcast.co.uk](http://www.wirebroadcast.co.uk)

Follow Robin on Twitter: @wirebroadcast

**wire**  
wirebroadcast.co.uk