

Wanted: Reliable Drives

Editors need their storage to be reliable, fast and strong.

By Claudia Kienzle



When you ask editors about storage, they usually can't tell you specifics about the way their storage systems work. Most say they don't want to have to think about their storage systems; it should all work very transparently to them.

But when editors have big drive failures where they lose mission-critical media, they never forget that kind of set-back. That's why many put RAID protection and other redundancy measures at the top of their list of concerns.

Beyond that, they want sufficient speed and throughput to handle increasingly common HD video, as well as ample storage in the terabytes to keep as much working media online as possible.

FAIL-SAFE CREATIVITY

At Belief (www.belief.com) in Santa Monica there's a graveyard of failed drives piled up in a corner. But, this leading design, live action and editorial company, hasn't had a drive failure since switching to storage solutions from G-Tech.

The facility's eight Apple Final Cut Pro Mac G5 editing stations all use the G-Tech G-RAID, which are FireWire drives optimized for professional video applications. These are considered portable storage systems that can be moved very easily from one workstation to another whenever necessary. One of the eight workstations is also equipped with the G-Tech G-Speed Fibre Channel drive system, which is dedicated to that workstation because it requires a PCI card. The facility has 20 G5 Macs in total for use in a variety of different applications.

"We're often working on projects that have tight deadlines for broadcast or live presentation," says Mike Goedecke, founder/owner/executive creative director for Belief. "It would be disastrous to lose our media due to a drive failure.

"What we use these drives for is not so much collaborative as it is fail-safe back-up of critical media assets related to multiple projects coming through our facility at any one time," he says.

Belief does both commercial projects as well as its own independent productions. For example, they have been working on the "up-fronts" for HGTV network. "The up-fronts are sales presentations that promote all the shows of the new season in order to attract advertisers," explains Goedecke. "It's important for the up-fronts to have great visual impact and high-quality imagery to help sell the shows to advertisers willing to take a chance on them. Once the show is a hit, the advertising rates skyrocket so up-front presentations attract a lot of advertiser interest."

At the same time, Belief is co-producing a two-hour documentary called *Serpent and the Sun* with director Shaahin Cheyene and his production company Victory Films. According to Goedecke, the film follows an Aztec shaman who is teaching an apprentice the shaman ways to ensure that the knowledge and culture will be passed along. The documentary also contrasts Aztec healing practices against Western medicine.

"We chose to work on this project because we felt it had social significance as well as distribution potential," says Goedecke. "We have been shooting in 1080/24p using the Panasonic HVX-200 P2 camera, with the intention of submitting the documentary to film festivals for HD projection and eventually to have it shot back to film.

Since a lot of the shooting is being done in Mexico, we've dedicated a workstation, along with a G-Speed Fibre Channel drive that serves as the primary storage for that media. We also use a G-RAID to transfer the media to do any additional finishing on other workstations."

Belief is currently working on a documentary called *Serpent and the Sun*. They are using G-Tech's G-Speed FC drive and the G-RAID on the project.