

CHESAPEAKE SYSTEMS EQUIPS ENERGY PROVIDER **EXELON** WITH A CUTTING-EDGE STORAGE SYSTEM

CASE STUDY

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OVERVIEW

Exelon has had an ongoing relationship with Chesapeake Systems for at least 15 years. During this time, Chesapeake Systems has provided technical support in various capacities. This past year, Exelon also signed an MSA (Maintenance and Support Agreement) with Chesapeake Systems.

ABOUT EXELON

Exelon is America's leading competitive energy provider, with one of the cleanest and lowest cost power generation fleets. Exelon was named one of Fortune's 2017 "World's Most Admired Companies," and has been named to the list for 11 consecutive years.

Constellation, one of Exelon's business units, is a leading competitive energy company providing power, natural gas, renewable energy and energy management products and services for homes and businesses across the continental United States. They have 2.5 million residential, public sector and business customers, including two-thirds of Fortune 100 companies.

Exelon's Creative Media team is headquartered in Baltimore and provides graphic design, video production, photography, printing and other support for Exelon and each of its operating companies. Bill Bealmear serves as the Supervisor of Creative Media. His department does 150 fully-produced linear projects and 800-900 graphic design jobs annually.

"What we do at Exelon is tell stories, and all of the technology Chesapeake Systems brings to the table supports the storytelling," Bealmear said.

THE PROBLEM

The media team at Exelon was facing a storage-related challenge. The SAN (Storage Area Network) contains hundreds of thousands of files, and the Creative Media team at Exelon had run out of space and "was figuring out what to delete," according to Bealmear. In addition, there were some software upgrades coming that would make Exelon's SAN obsolete.

“ In a media production environment, such as what you see at Exelon, many concurrent users work with high resolution footage and extremely large files. In this type of environment it is essential to invest in the kind of infrastructure that will support continuous reads of large quantities of footage that are accessed by multiple collaborators.

The SAN is a network of storage devices (that might include tape libraries and disk-based devices, like RAID hardware) that also connects those devices with the server. The SAN consists of many components, one of which is the metadata controller which manages the clustering of storage devices.

In the case of the Exelon project, Bill's existing metadata controllers were ready for a refresh as newer versions of the technologies became available.”

- Matt Gahs,
Project Coordinator
Chesapeake Systems





HOW CHESAPEAKE SYSTEMS HELPED

Chesapeake Systems consulted with Exelon regarding their SAN and presented a series of options ranging from, “put a bandage or patch on what you have,” to “purchase the equipment you need in order to support you for the future.”

“ We tell our customers all the time, ‘The more you plan and invest in your infrastructure, the more you’ll get out of it – in terms of increased productivity from your users – and in terms of increased reliability.’”

- Matt Gahs

We recommended that Exelon upgrade to Quantum StorNext 5, the most recent version of a highly reliable scale-out shared storage file system. This is one of the best data management systems for high performance shared storage.

The StorNext 5 environment is about 10 times faster than what Exelon was previously using and supports up to five times more managed files.

To implement the StorNext 5 file system we deployed Quantum Xcellis, a scale-out workflow storage system that optimizes workflow and scales by adding storage arrays.

To get the new SAN up and running required migrating approximately 60 terabytes of data comprised of a mixture of video and graphics files. This data had to be live on the existing system for active users while concurrently being migrated to the new storage system.

In a SAN, the metadata controllers act as traffic cops controlling who has access to certain block levels of disk, moving and allocating data space, locking files, or acting as a sharing device.

By purchasing the new metadata controllers and obtaining Quantum hardware and support, we felt that Exelon would be setting themselves up for success for the next six to eight years.



THE OUTCOME:

“Everything is working phenomenally, right out of the chute,” Bealmear said, noting that the storage expansion took them from 50 to 150 terabytes. “I have to hand it to Chesapeake Systems. They have the knowledge to make it work. Because that’s all we care about. Does it work? It’s gotta work. This is a big corporation, and when you need something, you need something.”

“ By investing in Xcellis, Bill received brand new, extremely fast, hardware. Xcellis is a Quantum product that includes the StorNext file system. This means the hardware and software layers of the storage environment are all from the same manufacturer and fully supported by Quantum. It is much better in terms of performance than the pre-existing system, and it’s setting him up for the next six to eight years down the road.”

- Matt Gahs

OBSERVATIONS:

“Chesapeake Systems knows what we have. They know where it is. They know when it was installed. They know all the IP addresses of everything, every piece of equipment, every server, all of it,” Bealmear said. “To my knowledge, we’ve only had two days of downtime in 13 years.”

This case study highlights how Chesapeake Systems establishes long term relationships with their clients. This allows them to provide their clients with the technical support they need, when they need it.

**READY TO DISCUSS HOW WE CAN HELP
YOUR ORGANIZATION?**

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