

CHESAPEAKE SYSTEMS MAXIMIZES EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE TO ELEVATE EVENT PRODUCTION AT U.S. FIGURE SKATING

Effective integration frees up an overstretched department to maximize returns on an enormous library of assets.

CASE STUDY

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OVERVIEW

Chesapeake System's support contract with U.S. Figure Skating (USFS) is a managed-services agreement for media/IT with an emphasis on workflow and integration. Chesapeake has become Event Production's media technology department, handling software upgrades, dealing reactively with issues that come up, proactively performing system security and health checks, identifying new technologies and assisting with expansion plans.

ABOUT U.S. FIGURE SKATING

Kevin Leonardo, director of Event & Video Production for U.S. Figure Skating (USFS) headquartered in Colorado Springs, called the then two (now three) person department "a small part of a large organization." It may be small, but Event Production is a key resource for the association, which is the national governing body for the sport of figure skating in the United States.

USFS is one of the strongest and largest national governing bodies within the winter Olympic movement, with more than 178,000 participants in member clubs, collegiate groups and school-affiliated societies.

Event Production handles live production for three to five major televised events annually, creates 150-200 pieces of content supporting USFS programs, vision, branding and Team USA athletes. The production area also provides production equipment and oversight to a team of technical producers in the field acquiring footage from U.S. Figure Skating qualifying competition events.

Event Production also maintains extensive archives, owning the rights to all U.S. figure skating championships since 2008, plus the domestic rights since 2014 to International Skating Union events like the World, European and Four Continents Championships, the Grand Prix series, and speedskating world cup and world championship events. In addition, a library attached to the World Figure Skating Museum & Hall of Fame in Colorado Springs contains footage from the 1930s through the early 2000s.



KEVIN LEONARDO

DIRECTOR OF EVENT & VIDEO PRODUCTION
U.S. FIGURE SKATING



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CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS

"We weren't taking advantage of Reach Engine's full capabilities, using it more as an ingest platform as opposed to the powerful management tool that it is," recalls Leonardo. "Overall, our system infrastructure just wasn't healthy."

At an event in Denver about four years ago, Leonardo saw a presentation about how Chesapeake Systems had integrated Reach Engine for the NFL's Philadelphia Eagles.

"I had a sidebar with Chesapeake's Nick [Gold] and Jason [Paquin] about our challenges and how I'd like to see us change and grow our infrastructure by maximizing the potential of Reach Engine," says Leonardo.

“Nick and Jason thought it was a good idea to take a look at our setup, and it wasn't long before Chesapeake was on board to support and optimize our infrastructure.”

- Kevin Leonardo

Leonardo notes that while USFS is almost 100 years old,

the organization's production environment was formed just six years ago. Previously, once a figure skating event was commissioned, Leonardo built out a production environment for the event and served as the live producer interacting with the TV production crew while outside editors created content. Then USFS decided to take advantage of its own vast assets and established a production environment capable of handling more in-house.

"We started by installing storage and Reach Engine, and a year later we hired a shooter/editor to focus on creating content while I focused on event management for our TV events, live-event production and maintaining the library," says Leonardo. "We have endless opportunities with our assets, but it's sometimes a challenge to store, tag and access footage."



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HOW CHESAPEAKE SYSTEMS HELPED

The first step Chesapeake took was to assess Event Production's hardware and infrastructure. "We weren't in the position to revamp everything," says Leonardo. "We needed to use what we had and make the most of it."

Chesapeake was in the unique position of being familiar with all of the system's components. "We knew all the building blocks quite well, so we could provide holistic support," explains Nick Gold, Lead Technologist at Chesapeake.

“ Kevin didn't need to re-invent the environment. He needed a service provider that knew how to integrate everything, deal with the whole, and extend the life of their infrastructure.”

- Nick Gold

Chesapeake's support contract with USFS is a managed-services agreement for media/IT with an emphasis on workflow and integration. In essence, Chesapeake has become Event Production's media technology department, handling software upgrades, dealing reactively with issues that come up, proactively performing system security and health checks, identifying new technologies and assisting with expansion plans.

Early on, Chesapeake helped implement a disaster recovery program.

"Colorado Springs went through a serious period of fires and floods. One of the fires was close enough to the office for us to think about disaster recovery," recalls Leonardo. "I understood that our system and license gave us the capabilities for backup and disaster recovery, but the way our backup was written we hadn't taken advantage of that."

THE SOLUTION

Chesapeake recommended a modification to the use of an existing Quantum LTO tape library to immediately archive all newly ingested content. This new process was achieved through a rewrite of the Archiware software workflows, including a custom ingest workflow with metadata, so that every ingest was backed up and cloned on two tapes. Duplicate copies of tape are now able to be stored offsite to fulfill a long-term archive and disaster recovery plan. Now, in addition to the security of redundancy, Event Production benefits from smoother workflows and improved client access to library footage.

"A more automated workflow makes ingest more efficient," notes Leonardo. "And a public distribution component enables athletes to go to usfigureskatingdigital.com to preview and purchase our rights-owned footage."

At Chesapeake's suggestion, Event Production also beefed up its SPACE NAS with an additional expansion chassis, which doubled the size of the system and offers 192TB of raw storage.



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THE OUTCOME

Chesapeake recently assisted Event Production in formulating a plan to preserve and digitize the entirety of USFS' historical footage.

"We seek grants and funding for this type of project," says Leonardo. "We're in a good position to make this happen since we can leverage Chesapeake's relationships in the digitizing and archiving fields and their knowledge of how to accomplish the process. We'll work with Chesapeake on developing ingest workflows for this footage."

"We value highly the preservationist aspect of Kevin's work," adds Gold. "To be part of the team to preserve the history of figure skating in the U.S. is an immense privilege. It's something we don't take lightly."

Leonardo is quick to point out the value that Chesapeake has brought to Event Production. "We're a small entity that's not familiar with this rapidly changing environment," he says.

“ We need somebody on the forefront that understands our needs and looks out for us. Chesapeake knows all the players and knows the right direction to take. And that's key to our time management. We don't have time to run around trying to figure things out.”

- Kevin Leonardo

"It was really tough for us to make our own suggestions about what to do and how to do it," Leonardo acknowledges. "But it was easy to make Chesapeake our front line of support."

This case study demonstrates ways that Chesapeake Systems can help organizations develop a successful, scalable solution with ongoing support that fits your needs.

**Ready to discuss how we can help
your organization?**

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