

PROXIMITY POWERS EMMY AWARD WINNING TOOLS WITH POSTGRESQL

Proximity is an industry leader in the rich media assessment management market. Its products are used to store, manage, search and transform multimedia for broadcast. That Proximity counts amongst its customers some of the biggest broadcasters in the world, including CNN, Fox News, ABC, NBC, CBS, BBC, ITN and Deutsche Welle, is a testament to the quality and reliability of the applications.

Such organisations can have millions of media assets, including audio, animations, pictures, video and scripts. Details, such as how the media was acquired, formats in which it is available, which broadcasts it has been and will be used in and which staff require access to the asset need to be well managed to ensure that deadlines and schedules can be kept.

In 1997, Proximity was founded with a goal of producing tools for the broadcasting, advertising and post-production industries which simplified the job of managing rich media assets.

FINDING A DATABASE

Given the amount of data and the complex relationships involved, Proximity knew that it would need an advanced, sophisticated, reliable database system. PostgreSQL had all they needed, without the hefty price tag: "When we began researching PostgreSQL, we could see it was a 'real' database. It had all the features we needed... the price was unbeatable and it gave us the right to redistribute it unhindered," says Tim Allen (Senior Software Developer).

The community surrounding PostgreSQL has also been a point of difference: "being able to subscribe to a mailing list and observe actual design discussions between developers is a big

help in understanding the strengths of the software." Proximity also values aspects of the open source nature of PostgreSQL: "we consider [the availability of source code] a major advantage of using an open source database. We haven't had to go and fix any bugs ourselves, but we have peered at the source to satisfy ourselves as to how things work."

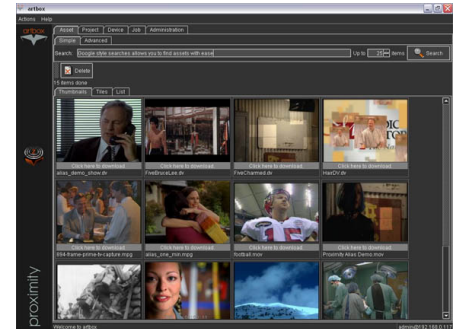
XENOSTORE: AN EMMY AWARD WINNER

In 2003, Proximity won a technical Emmy for Xenostore, the immediate predecessor of its current flagship application, artbox. It provides a powerful but easy to use interface to an organisation's media asset catalog.

HOW ARTBOX WORKS

Users upload multimedia assets into the organisation's catalog. From there, the asset can be associated with projects, whether they be a news piece or an advertisement. The media can also be transformed into different digital formats. It can then be pushed out to other media production tools on the customer's network. artbox also allows users to track requests for media. Furthermore, it integrates with other leading newsroom and post-production systems.

PostgreSQL plays a major role, storing all the meta data, associations and relationships which make artbox what it is. PostgreSQL "made it possible" for Proximity to build artbox and become a leader in the industry: "the cost of [other systems] would have been prohibitive," says Allen. It is a solution which has also proven to be scalable: Proximity's largest customers have as many as 1500



geographically dispersed production staff managing millions of media assets through artbox.

The artbox front-end is a Java application which communicates with a server written in C++, running on Linux. This server sits in front of the PostgreSQL database and manages all incoming user requests. Proximity makes use of other open source software, including PHP, Perl, Ruby and open source multimedia libraries. This foundation has made artbox unbeatable: "Our systems are deployed in high-availability environments and the combination of PostgreSQL on Linux has enabled us to deploy and support systems without any need for a large support team."

At half a million lines of code and after seven years of development, artbox has come a long way. PostgreSQL has allowed Proximity to achieve its goal of efficiency and reliability in rich media asset management without support headaches or unnecessary costs. As Tim Allen puts it: "It's free and it Just Works!"

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<http://www.proximitygroup.com>

MORE ABOUT POSTGRESQL

<http://www.postgresql.org/>