



## OK! magazine

### Customer profile

OK! magazine, published by Northern and Shell Pacific, is one of Australia's leading weekly celebrity magazines, with an initial launch circulation of more than 112,000.

### Industry

Media

### Location

Sydney, Australia

### Solution

Disaster recovery  
Storage management  
Archiving  
Data security and resilience  
Email management

### EMC products

EMC CLARiiON CX3-20  
EMC CLARiiON CX300  
EMC Replication Manager for Microsoft Exchange  
EMC RepliStor  
EMC SnapView

### EMC partner

Nexus

### Benefits

- Seamless switch from monthly to weekly publication
- Streamlined and efficient publishing process
- Reliable and scalable storage infrastructure
- Ability to recover lost or deleted files in minutes
- Peace of mind through real-time disaster recovery

## Celebrity Magazine Gains an Edge in Rapid Gossip Delivery with EMC Information Infrastructure

OK! magazine, published by Northern and Shell Pacific, entered the Australian celebrity magazine market in 2004 and was the first offshore edition of the successful weekly magazine from the United Kingdom. The magazine was first published monthly, but its popularity in Australia and skyrocketing circulation figures soon convinced management that weekly was the way to go.

### The move from monthly to weekly

The August 2006 switch from publishing weekly instead of monthly meant relocating to new premises and increasing staff numbers from 18 to more than 50. The company also needed to implement a production process that would help alleviate the pressure on teams and systems to meet deadlines.

With a promise to bring readers the biggest stories, best photographs, hottest stars and exclusive celebrity interviews every week, OK! knew it would need to stand out from the crowd in the cutthroat weekly celebrity magazine market.

“When you run a weekly publication, you’re working to incredibly tight deadlines and every minute counts,” said Andrew Cowell, Publisher and CEO of OK! magazine. “We needed an information technology infrastructure that would support our production processes when we more than quadrupled our workload.”

The magazine’s existing storage was directly attached to a server running Microsoft Windows Small Business Server 2003. While stable and reliable, the server did not have the capacity to meet the increased storage needs and processing speeds of a weekly publication. The need to store a lot of large image files was already dramatically slowing system performance. As the sole repository for production, management and email files, it also represented a single point of failure, which was an unacceptable risk.

“Our email systems are critical,” explained Cowell. “Staff need constant access to ensure we can get the best stories and images – as they happen. Sometimes this even involves email communication with the celebrities themselves as news breaks.”

OK! magazine was conducting nightly backups to tape. In the event of a system outage, this meant the magazine faced up to 24 hours data loss, with a 24-hour recovery period. While not ideal, this was an acceptable level of risk in a monthly publishing cycle. However, in a five-day production cycle, a disaster could mean losing 40 per cent of production time.

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## A solution that could go the distance

OK! magazine asked its technology provider Nexus to assess the options and recommend a solution.

Nexus first set out the requirements for the solution. These included:

- Fast file access for users, taking into account the increased number of production, picture desk and editorial staff
- Stable, reliable storage infrastructure
- Absolute data resilience for email and files
- The ability to quickly recover files in the case of accidental deletion or corruption in the production process
- Improved disaster recovery capabilities
- Cost-effectiveness
- An easily accessible archive
- A scalable solution that could meet future growth needs.

“Traditional storage systems are not designed to address the needs of the publishing industry,” said Sean Murphy, Principal at Nexus. “Magazine publishing is not about databases and office documents; it’s about images, Adobe InDesign and PDF files and

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– Andrew Cowell, Publisher and CEO, OK! magazine

workflows. A single image can take up to 40GB and be worth tens of thousands of dollars. Losing data this valuable is simply not an option.

“OK! magazine needed to be able to store these images securely and retrieve them from archive at short notice. It needed to support a team of creatives and editorial professionals who work around the clock selecting and purchasing images from across the world to satisfy its readers.”

To make the job even more difficult, the new system needed to be implemented while magazine production – and the move to weekly publication – was in progress.

## EMC has the answer

Nexus decided to implement a comprehensive information infrastructure solution that incorporated storage, archiving, disaster recovery and support for email systems. After evaluating systems from a number of vendors, including Apple, HP and NetApp, Nexus recommended a solution built around the EMC portfolio.

“EMC was the best fit for OK! magazine’s requirements,” said Murphy. “It provided the reliability we needed to ensure the magazine’s huge email systems would be secure, stable and recoverable and provided the best dual-site replication solution.”

In August 2006, Nexus began working with EMC to implement the solution. It installed an EMC CLARiiON CX3-20 storage area network (SAN) at the magazine’s new premises. This SAN connects to seven servers that deal with files, storage, data management and photo libraries.

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Half the magazine's staff stayed at the old premises operating off the old server and completing the final monthly edition. The other half were working in the new office to prepare the first weekly edition, supported by the new EMC information infrastructure. Once the monthly edition was complete, all staff moved to the new office. Despite this complicated operation, OK! met both its deadlines and staff were not affected.

Once this was complete, in December 2006 Nexus moved on to the next stage of the implementation, installing another CLARiiON CX300 SAN at Nexus's offsite data centre for disaster recovery.

Nexus installed EMC SnapView software to create local point-in-time copies of files and folders and EMC Replication Manager for Microsoft Exchange to create point-in-time copies of email. Nexus also installed EMC RepliStor to replicate files and folders between the production and disaster recovery sites. This enables OK! magazine's IT team to provide instantaneous, consistent and application-aware recovery of files or folders in the event of a production error or accidental deletion. Geographically distributing identical sets of data between the CLARiiON SANs increases the availability and security of the magazine's data.

"No other magazine in Australia has ever changed frequency from a monthly to a weekly publication, so we had no previous projects to refer to," said Cowell. "Despite this, there really were no hiccups. Nexus achieved the project on time, on budget and with no disruption to our business. We were very impressed with how smoothly the implementation went."

## Streamlined publishing process

The increased capacity and speed of the EMC solution enabled OK! magazine to streamline its publishing process.

The speed and capacity of the new system has removed the need to use a pre-press house. OK! magazine can now generate print-ready files internally and send them directly to the printer.

"We've actually removed an entire external process from the production chain through automation," said Martin Aitchison, Finance Director at OK! magazine. "Our systems can handle print-ready high-resolution files and final page layouts right up until deadline. There's no margin for error, but EMC gives us confidence that this critical data is safe."

## Stable, reliable and scalable information infrastructure

The reliability of the two CLARiiON SANs ensures management and users alike no longer need to worry about the availability of critical data, especially expensive images and pre-press files. The increased capacity of the solution has removed the strain on the magazine's production systems, making processing speeds much faster.

"Management meetings are no longer taken up by people discussing problems with storage and file access," said Aitchison. "The solution allows staff in all areas of the business – whether creative, production or management – to get on with their jobs."

The solution also provides a solid base for future expansion.

"While the EMC solution provides the capabilities and capacity we need now, it is also vastly extensible, so we know it will grow with us as we expand and add more titles to our portfolio."

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## Support for massive email systems

The new storage environment has fulfilled *OK!* magazine's requirement for 24x7 email access, with much larger mailboxes and heavier usage than most businesses. Multiple point-in-time copies now ensure 100 per cent recoverability of all email files and attachments.

"The EMC solution ensures that our mail system can handle huge images and files and a phenomenal amount of traffic with no problems," said Cowell.

## Safety net for accidentally deleted files

Automatically created point-in-time backups of data ensure that if a file or image is accidentally deleted or lost, it can be recovered within minutes by the magazine's production support team.

"Spending a day recreating work is simply not feasible when you're working to a weekly deadline," said Aitchison. "Since installing the EMC solution, we've already avoided missing deadlines because the IT team was able to retrieve a file or folder within ten minutes. Previously, this could have taken hours or days. Real-time disaster recovery has already proven itself."

"The EMC information infrastructure has helped us improve speed, production accessibility, flexibility and scalability, which are all fantastic," said Cowell. "But it also has much wider ramifications giving us a production edge over the competition."



EMC Australia  
Sydney  
(02) 9922 7888  
Melbourne  
(03) 8602 8000  
Brisbane  
(07) 3032 5100  
Canberra  
(02) 6243 810  
Perth  
(08) 9284 0777  
EMC New Zealand  
0800 999 362

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