

# LEAP Accelerates Performance with Qumulo on the Fast Track to the Cloud

Leading creative services agency forges path to the cloud, adds data security and accelerates performance up to 240x with Qumulo file data platform.

London-based LEAP is the UK's leading independent creative services agency which has served the advertising and marketing community for more than 30 years. LEAP's integrated advertising expertise spans creative production and adaptation across digital, video, still imagery, language and culture as well as local and global print fulfilment.

An office move in 2019 provided a convenient opportunity to replace outdated departmental legacy storage with a centralized platform. However, a key reason for the switch was to allow LEAP to benefit from the efficiency and flexibility of smart, virtual servers whilst maintaining the very highest levels of security and compliance. LEAP works with many of the world's largest financial institutions, both within these organisations as an internal LEAP-managed studio as well as contracted to work externally on a secure basis from LEAP's main production hub.

Investing in the latest platforms for servers and smart storage infrastructure provides better speed and access to LEAP's technology suite. The new file system enables LEAP's IT team to manage petabytes of unstructured data, accelerates the creative team's access to files, and helps reduce business risk from potential data security or data corruption.

Expert teams and innovative technologies are the core of its success, and LEAP is constantly evolving to meet and surpass the market's high expectations. However, several departments owned different RAID-based storage systems that the company had acquired over time. It was not possible to centrally manage the disparate systems, so IT had to separately manage each one for performance and capacity. As the systems aged, file opening and rendering performance suffered.

Capacity was a consistent challenge with the growth of large, cutting-edge media formats, and deduplication processes threatened to overrun capacity thresholds. Protecting data against loss or corruption was a constant concern.

LEAP needed a new approach to its data environment. According to Aidan Taub, Systems and Technology Director, "Having everything in the same place was going to be vital going forward. We needed a new solution that suited the entire business, rather than relying on individual departments to create their own."

## The Future is Now: One File Data System for All

Taub and his team reviewed several solutions, focusing on price/performance ratios and data systems that would grow organically with the company while also providing a path to the cloud for both rendering and data management.

Taub recalled, "When I first met the Qumulo team, I was impressed with how well they understood our specific needs. They quickly designed a solution that gave us the performance, flexibility, and economics we were looking for. Plus, their vision of the future of file data infrastructure perfectly matched ours."

# leap

## Business Outcomes from Moving to Qumulo

- Simplified path to the cloud.** LEAP knows the success of its creative workflow is heavily dependent upon leveraging the cloud. Qumulo simplifies rendering jobs by integrating cloud resources and removing the need to re-architect third-party applications to leverage object-based data services. With all of its content in Qumulo's single file data platform, LEAP has the ability to expand in any direction it wants to go, on prem, private, and multi-cloud.
- Data security and visibility.** LEAP's file data was previously spread across a wide range of disparate legacy storage systems. The previous storage environment was labor intensive for IT to manage and locating files at different points in the workflow was a real challenge. The move to Qumulo's file data platform enables LEAP to consolidate all creative content, and ensure no data gets lost in disparate file systems. Robust analytics enable IT to easily grow and optimize the infrastructure. Qumulo's real-time analytics also provides IT with ongoing visibility into who is using data, the performance of data access to each user, and insights into how the data is growing.
- Faster performance.** Previously, LEAP's end users experienced slow file opens and stuttering playbacks. Qumulo's file system, together with an upgraded network, eliminated poor performance with fast throughput and zero latency, delivering a 240x performance increase.

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“We’ve got all our teams working off the same data platform at the same time, not separate solutions for every department,” said Taub. “Our teams are happy and comfortable using Qumulo as their centralized data system. IT is happy too, because we have one place to look for files and one place for backup. And, the Qumulo analytics give us instant visibility into our data and users.”

Aidan Taub, Systems and Technology Director

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## No More Delays

Installation of the Qumulo file data platform and the migration of LEAP’s data was completed on schedule with no downtime – before staff moved into the new office. The project came in on budget with no surprise charges or overruns.

At the same time the LEAP team deployed Qumulo’s file data platform, they also installed a 10Gb network for their video clients. With Qumulo’s high performance and the faster network, LEAP realizes massive speed increases with no latency. End users experience zero delays when accessing their data and playbacks run smoothly.

Performance tells the tale. Within three months of the project implementation, sustained speeds came in at a high of 712MB/s reads and 360MB/s writes – not peak but a sustained 240x increase in write speed and 31x increase in read speed.

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“Qumulo is one step ahead of us in anticipating our needs. Chances are if I think of a new capability we want, Qumulo will be either developing it or have it available to us by the time we need it. There’s nothing I could tell Qumulo about file data systems that they don’t already know.”

Aidan Taub, Systems and Technology Director

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## Smooth Path to the Cloud

Qumulo enabled LEAP to replace resource-intensive backup and dedupe with automated snapshots and replication to Amazon S3. New, cloud-based data protection uses fewer resources, is highly automated and flexible, and enables rapid restore.

Since cloud extensibility was a key project requirement, Qumulo provided a proof-of-concept evaluation opportunity for LEAP leveraging Qumulo CloudStudio on AWS. The proof-of-concept demonstrated the high performance of Qumulo’s file system for rendering and answered all of LEAP’s questions regarding functionality and integration with Amazon S3 for longer-term data protection and retention.

LEAP is also integrating a Qumulo API to mirror to Amazon S3, granting file access to its freelance talent. With an extended global network of thousands of in-market experts contracted for localisation projects as well as artists, designers and motion graphics editors working remotely, efficient and secure data access accelerates creative projects and improves collaboration.

## Manage Ahead: Visibility & Analytics

Qumulo’s real-time analytics help LEAPs data administrators see and control data proactively to simplify management and enhance planning.

Qumulo’s analytics enable IT to optimize its data infrastructure. High visibility enables the team to see how many clients are connected, who is using the most bandwidth, where the system is growing quickly, and enables the team to monitor performance in real time. Instead of legacy system guesswork, the IT team can see exactly what is going on throughout the entire data platform.

One of the biggest visibility benefits is balancing performance for the entire company. The IT team knows when large files are hitting the server and can allocate capacity and accelerate file access for that operation without affecting any other department.

Taub said, “Knowing where our data was and how we were utilizing it was a critical requirement. Qumulo’s analytics gives us complete control over our data and allows us to immediately respond to changing conditions.”

## Qumulo Care: Dedicated to Customer Success

LEAP found Qumulo's customer support over Slack to be excellent. During the migration, files from a legacy system were not displaying on the new Qumulo cluster. Taub recalled, "I had a quick chat with the Qumulo guys on Slack. The fix was a simple tweak to the transfer command. It could not have been more straightforward."

Qumulo's team of experts is also highly proactive in reaching out to LEAP with suggestions for upgrades, optimization and troubleshooting, and preparing for future growth.

## Innovating Forward

Today, the entire LEAP organization is connected to Qumulo's file data platform across their office locations. The file system supports everything from VMs and VM hosts, to back office applications, to heavyweight creative and rendering operations. And it's doing it all without missing a beat.

When the Covid pandemic threatened and lockdown restrictions loomed, LEAP was able to seamlessly implement a move to remote working. Although such a scenario was not foreseen when the system was set up, Qumulo's ability to mirror data to the cloud has proved itself vital in this situation. Despite the extenuating circumstances, LEAP has been able to provide continuity of service, maintaining secure and efficient workflows for collaborators and clients.

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"We have successfully tested workflows that would be impossible without Qumulo. All along, they have taken our business as seriously as we do by encouraging us to use our data infrastructure in new ways. With Qumulo, we are planning for our future with an incredibly innovative approach to data systems and technologies."

Aidan Taub, Systems and Technology Director

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