LSI

Storage. Networking. **Accelerated.®**

GameBanshee

GameBanshee Keeps RPG News Flowing 24/7

GameBanshee

Location

Fargo, North Dakota

Contact

www.gamebanshee.com

Primary Focus

Provide site's viewers with consistent information about current and soon-to-be-released role-playing games, including news, reviews, previews, and interviews for a variety of RPG titles, and additional information for site's "featured" games.

"The Constellation® ES enterprise hard drives are ideal for us because they're specifically designed for the environment we're looking at here – many, many hours of use. And with LSI, there's just no better company for providing a RAID solution that keeps everything fault tolerant."

Jon Birnbaum,
Founder and Owner
GameBanshee

Recently celebrating its tenth anniversary, the role-playing game (RPG) website GameBanshee has evolved into one of the world's leading resources for RPG news, reviews and information. Much of the site's success can be credited to the hands-on approach of company founder and owner Jon Birnbaum, who proudly notes, "I consider GameBanshee to be the largest independently owned and operated RPG site on the Internet. I take a personal interest in everything we do."

Birnbaum believes this pays great dividends in terms of readership loyalty and industry credibility: "People who have followed GameBanshee since the early days understand how much time we've put into role-playing games over the past 30 years, particularly in the last 10 while the website has been online. We talk with the developers themselves on a regular basis, hit up lots of conventions and press events, and generally spend as much hands-on time with every RPG that we can. If a game is worth our readers' time, we let them know—and I think that makes them look at it much closer than they normally would."

Staying current with the latest RPG releases means GameBanshee must store a vast quantity of promotional materials, and ensure that this content is seamlessly available to GameBanshee's international team of remote editors – all with rock-solid reliability. Birnbaum soon realized he needed server storage with greater capacity, flexibility and durability, and turned to Seagate® Constellation® ES enterprise hard drives paired with a MegaRAID® SATA+SAS Controller.

Outgrowing the Office Server

GameBanshee's previous file server was an outdated system that lacked the easy accessibility Birnbaum required. "The server was not easily customizable, and it was difficult for our remote users to efficiently retrieve important information required for each day's workflow," recalls Birnbaum. "I wanted to keep all of our files in one secure, centralized location that any of my contributing editors could easily access via remote desktop and then use to grab whatever files (review credentials, trailers, screen shots, etc.) they needed."

Every month GameBanshee receives dozens of game trailers, which can run up to 1GB apiece, as well as hundreds of screen shots. Birnbaum's requirements also included the ability to not only store and serve these files, but also provide extra offsite backup for GameBanshee's web server files. Birnbaum explains, "We have MySQL databases that are very large, hundreds of gigabytes, and we need to keep redundant backups of those. Losing any of those databases could mean months, if not years, of lost data."

Multiple remote users, along with an ever-growing number of enormous files that must be securely stored—it soon became obvious that GameBanshee was quickly outgrowing its modest office server (and desktop-class storage system).

"Challenged to deliver not only more content for their gaming readership but to do so reliably again and again, GameBanshee looked to Seagate's Constellation ES enterprise drives to ensure a consistent and reliable experience every time."

Barbara Craig, Sr.
Product Marketing Manager
at Seagate

And so the search for a new GameBanshee server began, with Birnbaum clearly defining his requirements: "I wanted more of a regular business solution, without the limitations of a proprietary system. We were looking for something that we could build on our own, customized to include everything we needed, all of the software, all of the different shares. Plenty of robust storage space was a given, which is why we specified multiple high-capacity, enterprise-class drives."

Sticking with the Best

Choosing vendors for the storage components of his new server system didn't take Birnbaum long. He explains, "Before running GameBanshee, I worked at UPS as a network administrator for 11 years. I've used Seagate drives since the early 1980s, I've always been a Seagate guy. When it comes to RAID controllers, if you go on Newegg.com or any of the other sites we use on a regular basis, all of the top-rated cards are always LSI.

Birnbaum initially selected a rack-mount server from a well-known vendor, but quickly ran into problems. "It was completely proprietary, and the LSI card we wanted to use wouldn't work with it. The server was designed with a backplane and its own controller card—just a very limiting, closed solution. We ended up scratching that and building our own server, then everything worked flawlessly."

As testimony to the extensive interoperability testing that Seagate and LSI each conduct with the other company's products, Birnbaum notes, "We never had one hitch building the server, upgrading the firmware, installing drivers – from start to finish it all went absolutely perfectly."
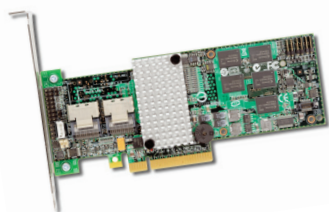
Reliability, Capacity, Value

With his eye firmly on maximum reliability, Birnbaum chose eight 2TB Seagate Contellation ES 6Gb/s SAS hard drives in concert with an LSI MegaRAID SAS 9260-8i RAID controller running in RAID 6 configuration.

Enthuses Birnbaum, "The Constellation ES enterprise hard drives are ideal for us because they're specifically designed for the environment we're looking at here – many, many hours of use. And with LSI, there's just no better company for providing a RAID solution that keeps everything fault tolerant." GameBanshee's new server boasts almost 11TB of enterprise-class storage in a RAID 6 setup that can withstand up to two drive failures without losing data.

LSI MegaRAID SAS 9260-8i

The LSI eight-port MegaRAID SAS 9260-8i provides a new level of performance, data protection and scalability for internal storage systems, handling up to 32 SATA or SAS devices. With data transfer rates of up to 6Gb/s per port, this value-priced RAID controller delivers new features and improved performance while supporting all the features of the previous 3Gb/s SAS specification. It also uses the latest in RAID-on-Chip (ROC) technology and complies with the PCI Express® 2.0 specification for high-bandwidth applications.

Seagate® Constellation® ES

The Seagate® Constellation® ES drive is the fourth-generation 3.5-inch enterprise nearline drive, specifically designed for punishing 24/7 storage environments. It enables cost-effective, capacity- rich enterprise storage systems by combining best-in-class reliability (1.2 million hours MTBF), vast capacity (up to 2TB) and class-leading rotational vibration tolerance (key in high-density applications). 6Gb/s SAS performance and optimum power and cooling efficiency via Power- Choice™ host-selectable options make the Constellation ES even more compelling.

No Compromise Storage

Was Birnbaum's choice of Seagate hard drives and an LSI RAID controller driven by his absolute refusal to compromise data protection? "Yep, that's exactly right," he firmly states. "If we lost any data it would set us so far back – if it got to the point that our web server crashed, and the office server with our offsite back ups crashed, we would lose 10 years. Some of our data, we've been hammering away on since day one. So it's just not an option to lose any data permanently."

To Learn More:

Seagate® Constellation® ES Hard Drives, visit www.seagate.com.
LSI MegaRAID SAS 9260-8i Controller Cards, visit www.lsi.com/channel.

For more information and sales office locations, please visit the LSI website at: www.lsi.com